

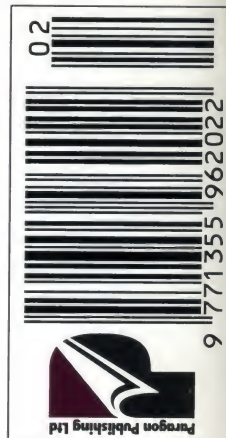
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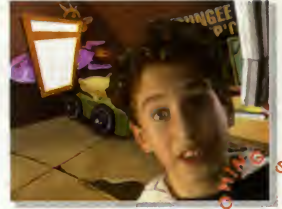
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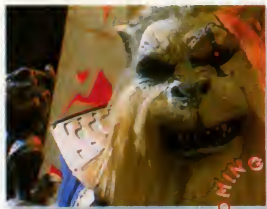
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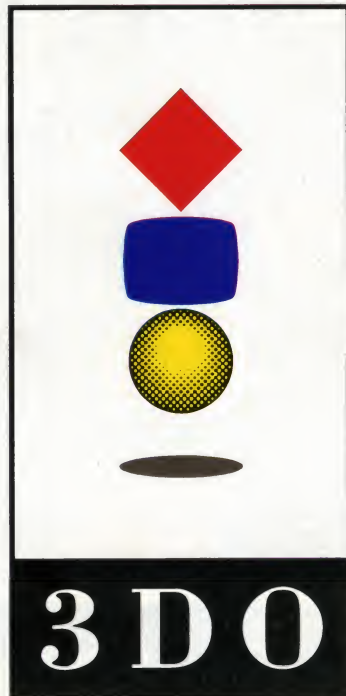
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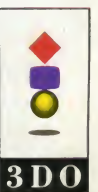


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3DO

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Dirt Racer, Wing Commander III & more...*





news

MAGIC CARPET – IT'S OFFICIAL



The biggest game on the PC in 1994, *Magic Carpet*, is to be officially released on the 3DO system within the first half of this year, according to The 3DO Company.

The primary reason that *Magic Carpet* has been so successful (it's sold well in excess of 100,000 units across Europe on the PC alone) is that it manages to combine Bullfrog gameplay with the most stunning polygonal graphics of all time. Within the PC's SVGA mode, buildings not only look real, but intricately real – baroque pieces of Prince Charles' approved architecture without a straying pixel in sight. The result is the Nirvana of a wholly believable landscape, designed for the optimal enjoyment of the gamesplayer – magical in itself.

Magic Carpet is set in a fictional, alternate world where natural power ('Mana') lies in residues in the earth. The leaders of the land all share one thing in common – to ability to draw the natural power from the earth and use it for their own personal, magical ends.

With Mana, not only can the player ride a magic carpet, he or she can also build their own white castle, cause volcanoes, earthquakes, make it rain fireballs and even inspire lightning. With so many destructive spells available it should come as no surprise to find that the various barons spend their time fighting to the death – trying to kick all of the other magic users off their piece of land to create their very own principality.

It's an incredibly involving game, one of those products that's very difficult to leave once you've started to play, and so its arrival on the 3DO is very much to be looked forward to. EA's contribution to the 3DO cause cannot be understated. It is products like these that guarantee its success. The only slight disappointment is that the PC *Magic Carpet* was at its very best over a network. 3DO owners are unlikely to find themselves in such an environment, so we can only hope that Bullfrog include an option for modem-play. Then *Magic Carpet* really would fly.

3DO LIKES 3DO MAGAZINE?

As readers from Issue One know, although we're an independent publication we've enjoyed great support from The 3DO Company and the rest of the 3DO family, all of whom really wanted to see a magazine that would showcase their great work. Thankfully, the reactions to Issue One were pretty positive, none more so than that of John Edelson, 3DO Europe's Director of Sales and Marketing. An ex-employee of Silicon Graphics and a great gamesplayer, we really value John's opinion. However, exercising editorial discretion we've printed his praise in its entirety, and criticisms in brief! We'll open the *Way Of The Warrior* debate in full next month, but for the moment the highlights:

'Dear Editor,

First of all, let me congratulate you on the fabulous inaugural issue of The 3DO Magazine. No, I don't just want to congratulate you, I want to rave about the magazine. I read it cover to cover and loved it. Every customer that I spoke to also loved it. It's good reading, the reviews are substantive, and you're right in the heart of the leading market for advanced game systems. A great system, great software, and now a great magazine. It should be a great year for 3DO customers in the UK. I look forward to reading the next issue.

"With all that said, there were one or two reviews with which I disagreed. Fair enough. There was one in particular, however, which I felt did not do justice to a really interesting game, so I'd like to talk about it. It has been a major top-seller in the US and Japan: *Way Of The Warrior*. In the States, there were a number of divergent reviews on WOTW... People seem to love WOTW or hate it... Die Hard Game Fan wrote: "Naughty Dog has somehow captured the spirit of *Mortal Kombat* while adding a sense of comic relief and better, longer, and more balanced rounds... Graphics... better than MK. Music... Much better. Characters... The Coolest. Buy this game." Overall, WOTW has sold great in the US so when it becomes available here, I think it'll be a big hit.'

After first praising John for his excellent taste in magazines, I think our only comment on *Way Of The Warrior* is to point out our main criticism was its lack of originality. Technically there is much to praise about the game, as we said in our review, and there the subject rests until Issue Three. If there are any readers who've got a strong opinion on WOTW please write in to our 3DO Interactive section. We bow down to no-one in our expertise in games, but even we aren't perfect and we're always ready to debate our reviews with people. Games are fun, and often as not arguing about them is a big part of the fun too. – Stuart Wynne, Asst Publisher.



GOLDSTAR'S MOVIE MANIA

GoldStar has joined the VideoCD brigade with its just-announced GPA551M 3DO MPEG Digital Video Module. While the title is ungainly, the unit itself is exceptionally compact and, unlike Panasonic's external add-on, easily fits inside the GoldStar 3DO. The unit went on sale in America this January for \$199, including a bundled copy of *Total Recall*, starring Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Jim Ireton, of GoldStar's Multimedia Division, provided a predictably upbeat soundbite: "The top-rated system in the video gaming universe now expands its reputation as a family entertainment centre by playing action-packed movies... This is truly the future of interactive entertainment."

Despite some reports of VideoCD's imminent demise, the CES saw several new VideoCD players including a Technics SL-VM500 with a carousel for longer play. Over Christmas VideoCD releases exploded, principally

due to the system's popularity as an add-on for PCs. Over the longer term MPEG2 is undoubtedly the future, but currently there are two competing systems in development – both offering around 140min playing time and broadcast quality visuals, but requiring new CD drives – and it could be years before a clear standard emerges.



SUPER SSFIIX DEMO



Without a doubt the most impressive version of *Street Fighter* on a console yet. This really is arcade perfect, and it's yours to try for free in the comfort of your own home.



The world's only arcade-perfect home conversion of the world's best beat-'em-up, the incomparable 3DO *Super Street Fighter II Turbo*, has been brought to you, via 3DO Magazine, by those great guys at Panasonic. Due to licensing problems we couldn't actually put the Crystal Dynamics disc on our cover, although you can get it free by using the card, so Panasonic kindly gave us permission to use *SSFII Turbo* instead. It's a Japanese-language demo, so the joypad instructions aren't in English, and the audio hasn't been perfectly tweaked for PAL like the finished game, but with no less than four characters to play around with – Cammy, Chun Li, Ryu and Ken – I don't think anyone should complain.

The game uses the X/PLAY button to give a full six buttons for as near perfect, arcade-style control as possible. However, to get the most out of the game you really need a six-button joypad like Panasonic's FZ-11JXP. Designed by Capcom, it feels absolutely bril-

liant, is amazingly cheap at just £29.95 and is reviewed on page 22.

The complete game features no less than sixteen characters, plus the super secret Akuma, and won a full five stars in the first issue of 3DO Magazine. In Championship Mode you travel around the world, taking on every other character (and your double), each with their own beautifully drawn location, before a final confrontation with Akuma himself. There's also a comprehensive Versus Mode where two players can go head-to-head, challenging each other with any of the game's characters, changing them whenever they want while the game keeps track of the overall score. Our demo version doesn't have a Versus Mode, however if you play in Championship Mode and the second player presses fire then he or she can join in for a one-off battle as any one of the four characters on offer. We'll have a full set of special tips on the game next month.

SNIPPETS

Creative Labs' 3DO Blaster finally went on sale over Xmas, unfortunately, despite all the early talk about ultra-competitive pricing, the system's RRP ended up at a hefty £350. Once again the problem seems to be supply and competition, the system is selling out in America, stocks are low and Europe isn't a very competitive market. Nevertheless, it's a slick system with the card coming with a joypad, *Shockwave*, *Griders*, some utility PC software plus some neat, original gimmicks like speech control for joystick movements. To make it work, you'll also need a Sound Blaster Pro card and a 563 CD-ROM Drive. For more details, contact Creative on TEL: 0734 344322.

CORPORATE MOVES 1: Despite earlier denials, Electronic Arts has finally bought up Bullfrog, the enormously successful and innovative developer it has so long been closely associated with. Bullfrog made its name with *Populous*, a unique combination of god-style strategy play and 3D graphics. After a couple of data disks and sequels, it came up with *Syndicate* and, just last year, the mega-hits *Theme Park* and *Magic Carpet* – all three of which will be coming to 3DO. EA is valued at about \$400 million and has dug into its reserves to the tune of around \$45 million to buy up the Guildford-based operation. Bullfrog made profits of £1.7 million last year and only agreed to the take-over on the understanding it would allow more, not less freedom to produce games with greater control on the publishing of its titles.

EA's hot new announcement at the CES, *Immercenary*, was actually bought in from outside developers. The game's presentation is apparently on a par with *ShockWave*, while the story has a futureworld turning to its past for a hero – you – who can fight the 'Perfect' computer which used to make their world an idyll, but is now devoted to their destruction. The game boasts a first person, 3D perspective through which you can explore its futuristic environment, interacting with various objects and fighting with the numerous agents of the silicon enemy. Expect a full review soon with the game due around March time.

CORPORATE MOVES 2: Not content with owning Atari Games and Tengen, both now amalgamated within Time-Warner's Interactive division, and buying *Renegade* just four months ago, the US entertainment giant has taken a 35% interest in veteran US games publisher Accolade for \$12 million.

Trade newspaper, *CTW*, recently supported Panasonic's upbeat reports on FZ-1 sales with its counterpoint column: 'Without a doubt, Panasonic's 3DO raised the most smiles over this Christmas. Nearly all the retailers *CTW* spoke to claimed it was a hot-selling machine and many were also out of stock.' Even when the new, more easily manufactured FZ-10 appears Panasonic are unsure they'll be able to meet demand for the machine through most of '95 – a pan-European roll-out for the machine has also been delayed.

The Future Zone retail chain of 100+ shops has seen its finances suffer to the tune of some £2 million losses. Chairman Bev Ripley blamed a 'dreadful' summer and tight margins on PC products. Ironically, Future Zone doesn't support 3DO which was a lifeline for many independents over Xmas with machines selling out nationwide.

3DO World

Whilst there's a wealth of 3DO software officially available at present, patrons of import software shops will have noticed there's an enormous array of games that aren't officially available, mainly Japanese software that for one reason or another, hasn't found its way into your local HMV. There are a few reasons why these titles are only available from import shops, the most common being that they're exceedingly poor, and thus haven't been picked up by a European distributor – the initial batch of software available for 3DO in Japan was huge, and of varying quality – so most will never be released. Many foreign titles are also too eccentric to be released here – there's loads of weird Japanese RPG and Manga beat-'em-ups that rely on cult, Japanese fads that are unlikely to find a wide audience, such as *Ultraman Powered*, reviewed below. Some import games are likely to reach these shores, but have simply been distributed abroad first but fans and collectors may be keen to snap such title up early. The chief difficulty with Jap imports is that most have little or no English language instructions – many of the games we've had in are simply too odd to work out – so it would be unwise to purchase any unofficial release without first asking to play the thing, especially as import games are inevitably more expensive than official releases.

Over the next few pages is just a brief cross section of what's doing the import rounds at the moment. Next month, we'll have hopefully deciphered quite a few more, but the following are pretty good examples of what you're likely to find in the darker recesses of your friendly videogame import shop, a bizarre combination of flawed games, cult obscurities and soft porn, as scavenged by Dave Westley and Mark Wynne.

Microcosm

Developer: Psygnosis

Microcosm can be seen as the granddaddy of all Silicon Graphic pre-regenerated games. First released on the FM Towns (a PC/console hybrid relatively unknown outside of Japan) it has so far followed wherever a CD-ROM drive has existed in quantifiable numbers – coming to the PC at the beginning of 1994, and making its way onto Amiga's underpowered CD32 console mid-

way through last year.

That it has yet to be released officially on the 3DO in the UK comes as no surprise, however. Though its superslick FMV intro caused jaws to drop at the 16-bit time – and even now looks fairly impressive – it was largely the novelty value that sold the 'game'. In a world where the Super Nintendo's Mode 7 reigned supreme, to see Silicon Graphic generated pinkie-red vein walls

scrolling by was awesome. To then get previously unparalleled FMV mini-movies spliced into the game made it a 'must see' – a piece of iconoclastic history that had to be played by everyone.

Sanity, fortunately, was soon regained. As FMV and Silicon Graphics began to be used more frequently so the magic of *Microcosm* faded. People saw past the abundance of visual candy and started to look for the actual game itself – and they didn't like what they saw.

Your miniaturised vehicle, right, enters a pink domain. In-game graphics, below, are tedious with a constantly scrolling vein as your backdrop.



Microcosm takes its influence from *The Fantastic Voyage*, the intro showing the President of mega-corp, Axiom, being injected with a miniaturised craft containing the hero of the show (you). With said craft the player has to journey through the President's body, destroying enemy craft as he goes.

Play for a short while and you soon realise that the first of the SG games failed to bother itself with such notions as interactivity or indeed gameplay. Later games such as *Novastorm* (see below) or *MegaRace* put an invisible mask around the pre-generated areas so that the computer could be informed when the player 'touched' the sides, went over a 'power-up', etc. In *Microcosm* it's immediately apparent that you're totally uninvolved to the backdrop – it might as well not exist as far as the game is concerned. Indeed, it actually looks as though you're disconnected – the 'rough' foreground sprites just don't seem as though they're part of the same game as the super-smooth background.

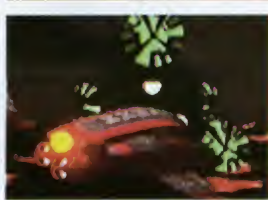
Gameplay itself is a simple shoot-'em-up. Enemy sprites come from both behind and winding along the vein from the front. Because your sprite is located towards the back of the screen it's almost impossible to avoid enemies that come from behind, and the controls are such that you need to be super-dextrous to get enough control to be able to shoot even those enemies coming straight at you. The result is that you die frequently. The game does give a generous number of continues, but nevertheless they're soon used up and, because there's no password save, you'll have to start right from the beginning again. Naturally, incredibly frustrating.

It is, undoubtedly, a good thing that *Microcosm* has failed to be released officially. It sits uncomfortably between the 16 and 32-bit worlds and, for all of the surface gloss, fails to deliver the gameplay that's necessary if a game hopes to do well in this wiser, game-smart age. dw

Novastorm

Developer: Psygnosis

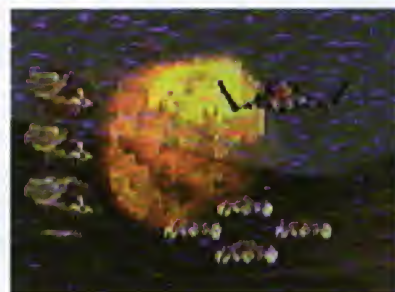
Effectively the follow up to *Microcosm*, *Novastorm* attempts to address all of the misgivings and inadequacies of the original game whilst retaining all of the visually impressive elements that contributed to its success. And it succeeds – in part. The smooth scrolling background is now fully interactive (hit it and you'll know about it!), the sprites zoom towards you more realistically and the game comes with some stunning imagery in Guardians that are just as interactive and intelligent as non-pre-regenerated sprites.



Both *Novastorm* and *Microcosm* are remarkable for their rendered graphics



Scavenger, below, is the proto-type craft devised by the military, that must go head-to-head against Scarab X, an integrated intelligence, created by scientist, now gone awry. In-game graphics aren't a match for out-game sequences.

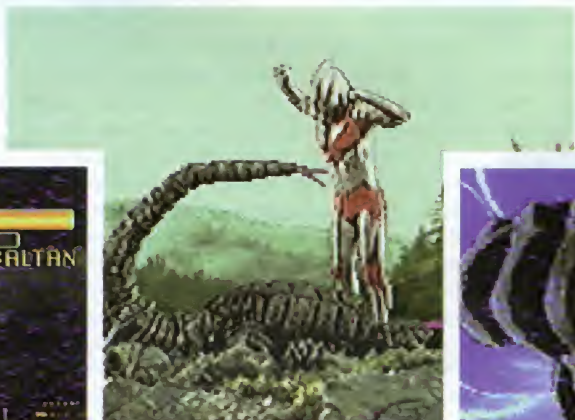


In fact Psygnosis felt that such an improvement had been made over *Microcosm* that they didn't want the game to be considered a sequel when they released the game on the PC over Christmas. However, on the PC, Psygnosis had done more than revamp the graphic engine. They'd also totally re-designed the structure of the game from the original FM Towns version, re-working it for a European audience. As a result many PC magazines claimed it to be the best shoot-'em-up the PC had yet been given – a slick and absorbing product that

kept you interested long after the initial dazzle of the graphics had faded.

Yet 3DO *Novastorm* is the original working of the Japanese FM Towns version – and it's poorer for that fact. The graphics are undoubtedly better – the 3DO Cinepak allowing for much smoother scrolling landscapes, and infinitely more stunning Guardians. But the idiosyncratic way it's been put together means it's more frustrating and less of a pleasure to play for long periods of time – mainly because when you die it's right back to the beginning again.

Unlike *Microcosm*, *Novastorm* provides a fairly conventional setting and storyline (no poking about in someone's vein here). The game takes its inspiration, in part, from the Luddite Terminator movies. The year is 2129 and the human-occupied >



The weird (and wonderful?) *Ultraman* features excellent Power Ranger's style FMV, but limited in-game action. The in-game graphics in particular, are fairly impressive static, but watch them move and you'll be dismayed at the slowness.



> Bator system is slip-sliding into anarchy, its once mighty federation free-falling into destruction. The cause of the disaster is the enemy within – the human race and its so called ‘intelligence’. Its creation, Scarab X, an integrated artificial intelligence at the centre of a state-of-the-art computer network, saw one weak link in its logical chain – humanity, and with customary binary-coldness saw the only possible remedy in the complete annihilation of humanity. The military, in a last ditch to save themselves, launched a proto-space fighter, *Scavenger IV* (the original title of the UK version) to track down and destroy its progeny.

And that’s the game really. You fly along in your craft shooting the enemies coming towards you, getting ever more powerful weapons in the process, until you reach the final confrontation and face Scarab X. It’s infinitely more entertaining than *Microcosm*, mainly because the backdrops change constantly, and you always want to get that next weapon, but it really only deserves to be a minor success. If Psygnosis were to release the PC version, along with its brilliantly atmospheric pumping techno-beat, then it would be a different story. Somehow I doubt they will, however, primarily because Sony own Psygnosis who also happen to be the manufacturers of rival-console, the Playstation... **dw**

Ultraman Powered

Developer: Bandai

With stupid stories, ultra low budgets and lots of men dressed in ludicrous rubber suits pretending to be 60 foot monsters, the cult Japanese TV series Ultraman is the obvious inspiration for the more tepid PowerRangers, and with hundreds of hours of the TV series to draw on, plus easily recognised heroes and villains, this is an obvious choice for a big 3DO licence. That Ultraman probably won’t see the light of day over here can be attributed to two significant reasons. Firstly the TV series has never been transmitted over here, so its brand recognition is nil, and secondly, it’s crap. Well, maybe that’s a little harsh, because a good deal of fun can be had with this game, but most is at the expense of the TV clips themselves, which are ludicrous, and the frighteningly annoying speech samples, with Ultraman shouting “Shaki!” every three seconds, the irritation soon reaching a point of giddy hysteria.

As a beat-em-up, this has a few modern touches which should have endeared it to a 3DO audience not weaned on the genre. The backgrounds are well digitised landscapes, with irrelevant space craft whizzing about to liven things up, and the digitised sprites of Ultraman and his rubber, wobbly friends is pretty good, as they stomp and bash their way through the miniaturised sky-

scrapers below them (they’re giants, you see). Also impressive is the zooming function, as used to good effect in *Way Of The Warrior*, which lets you examine the sprites more closely when the battle moves in for hand-to-hand combat. Sadly, *Ultraman Powered* plays very poorly though, with slow responses to your commands and rather lethargic leaps and bounds across screen. As well as this, there’s relatively few moves, and the enemies are all barely animated, shuffling lumps, that simply cannot whip about screen at the rate required for a truly exciting beat-em-up. Compensation for this inadequacy is offered in the form of special powers with each monster (and Ultraman) capable of firing bolts of energy or blowing gusts of freezing breath, but these damage rather than enhance play, since computer controlled opponents inevitably resort to these moves in crisis, which are quite unavoidable. If a human opponent finds out how to implement these annoying cheat tactics, God help your sanity. They’re better banned.

One welcome twist in *Ultraman Powered* is the inclusion of a 3D shoot-em-up, in which your jump-suited hero fly’s down a street in a spacecraft blasting at a tentacle waving monster. No, it’s not any fun to play, sorry, but it looks brilliant, and actually makes you duck when you swerve around the ugly brute’s face.

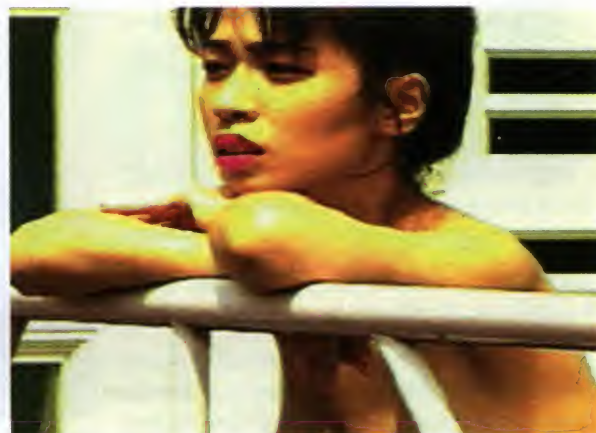
All in all then, this is a package that does seek to utilise the many powerful abilities of the 3DO, with well coded camp FMV sequences, and nice looking fighting and 3D sequences, all rendered useless by completely appalling gameplay. As a novelty gift to someone you don’t like much, it comes highly recommended, and as a fascinating slice of Japanese culture, it’s well worth studying, but for anyone wanting a decent game, this has nothing to offer. **mcw**

To Be Titled

(Japanese girlie filth)

Developer: Intarux

This is a classic example of the silly, soft-porn novelty titles that the Japanese are flagging by the truck load. We can’t deduct what this is actually called, but it’s basically a scissors, paper, stone game, with bints. There’s five, nubile and (very) young Japanese girls to play against, and it’s simply a question of picking A, B or C to pick your weapon and then watching her pick hers (you know, paper wraps stone, stone blunts scissors, scissors cut paper). All the pouting girlies are pretty useless at this game, it must be said, and when you wrap her stone (for example), you’re given the choice of either removing an upper or lower garment. If this was an American Strip Poker game, you can bet she’d have more clothes on than an Arctic explorer, dragging out the stripathon for ever, but Japanese girls seem to wear next to nothing anyway, so it only takes about five wins to have her rolling around in the nude, discreetly covering her private parts and looking shame faced (in a mock-coy fashion). This, you might think, would be



Single play say’s it all really. This delightful young thing is pretty close to complete bareness, so soon it’ll be MTV style nudeo mucho galore. You can’t fault the elegant simplicity of this stunning title.

ample reward in itself, but generously, that’s not the end. Stripping the young babe gives you access to a two minute video of the defeated femme flaunting around in the altogether and striking altogether un-ladylike poses.

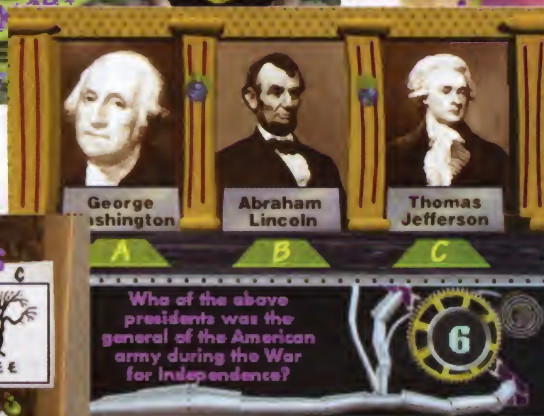
And there you have it. Whilst playing this title, I felt exploited, cheap and lecherous, but it was still damned good fun, all the more pleasurable for being bloody easy. Of course, you’d be a complete fool to fork out for this on import for anything more than a tenner, because it has far too short a shelf life, but if you’ve a fetish for Japanese beauties, this must be the most exciting release you’ll have ever seen, and I can reliably inform you that there’s no shortage of similar stuff around, so check out your import dealers. **mcw**

3DO Magazine



This monster bears an uncanny resemblance to Dave, you know. The stunningly poor *Ultraman*.

Club 3DO: Station Invasion...



TV will
never be the
same again.



Introducing the first truly interactive kids' TV show that enriches and entertains. You've never seen anything like this. An educational title that's actually fun.

Kids have taken over a local TV station and you have been hired as the producer. You will come face to face with

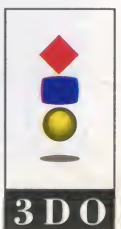
the television stars - real life video characters - an unusual bunch who need your help.

But beware, the better you get, the harder the game becomes. Even when you have a smash hit on your hands, you may find your friends have been hired to see if they can do a better job.

The content is designed by teachers to enhance the understanding of the arts and sciences, and the game even adjusts to match your ability.

Station Invasion develops thinking and memory, as well as problem solving capabilities.

Station Invasion - Kids' TV will never be the same again.



The 3DO system and 3DO software are available from Game Limited, selected HMV stores, Virgin Megastores and all good independent dealers. Call: 0800 444220 for your local dealer.

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Baron R K Von Wolfsheild

Making Porsches in a VW World

Silent Software's Reichart Von Wolfsheild is one of videogaming's most colourful and controversial characters. After earning a fortune as an MTV producer and TV ad maker, he set up a software company he estimates is a thousand times more efficient than its competition. Stuart Wynne asked about his story and why he thought 3DO was winner.

When did you first get involved in the business?

"I started in 1974 with the Altair and then went onto the Apple I, II, the Timex-Sinclair computers, the ZX81 I think you called it over there. When the IBM PC came out I actually wasn't very interested in it - it was too primitive, it didn't even have a video output... In the Eighties the Macintosh came out and I was a real fan, it was so much simpler to use than even the [Apple] Lisa. It affected totally what I thought you could do with computers. But in 1984 a friend of mine introduced me to the Black Box Amiga. I realised then that there was a platform on which games and utilities could be created much easier, much faster than even on a Macintosh. With colour, and sound!

In 1984 I didn't like most computer games, but I liked a game on the Atari by Jay Minor called *Tank*. It was simple and given away with the Atari and in it you drove a tank through a maze on a search for your enemy. I like the idea of tanks because it doesn't get any simpler. Computer games are particularly enjoyable when they take the form of some sort of destruction or violence and what epitomizes destruction more, a person running around with a gun?... or a Tank - a big, heavy vehicle with a big, powerful cannon?"

Are you essentially a programmer?

"No, my background is as a traditional artist. But my history is odd. In essence while most people would love to come to Hollywood and get in the film business, this was always my worst nightmare! Friends kept coming to me with film and TV jobs, but I didn't want them.

"In the early Eighties a friend of mine, a director who worked with Michael Jackson, came to me and said he wanted to create short videos for popular music - like the Monkees used to do. And I knew it was the Mike Nesbitt thing, MTV. So I was the art director and special effects guy working with a whole bunch of friend. We

produced something like the first 10% of videos that aired on MTV. I was working with all these pop stars like J. Giles, Rick Springfield, Donna Summer...

"It was a lot of fun, but what I really wanted to do was work in computers. Of course, eventually the two worlds collided with computer special effects. I did TV ads for Pepsi, Pizza Hut, God Father's Pizza, and 7-11. The money was great; I made more money in a month that most people earn in a year. But I just hated it, the whole scene: the drugs, the self-importance, alcohol, cigarettes. I guess I was a nerd but I didn't look like it! I was really craving intellectual stimulation. There's only so many times I can discuss where to put a camera, what colour to use.

"It was also about the time two acts took off, Boy George and Wham, and I just thought 'this is over, this is so frivolous and crappy.' George Michael has gone on to do some great stuff but Wham was so child-like and techno-boppy. I was hoping to get into the epic grunge, even back then, I wanted music videos to do something serious and artistic. Wham was eye-candy. So I said 'I can't do this anymore.' I stopped working for a year and began doing research on computer to see what the market wanted.

"I decided what I wanted to do was, well, a game I wanted to play and on a PC with a serial port, this meant it could include modem play. And this Amiga was awesome, so basically what I did was write a fast asynchronous transfer routine for it. The other thing I did was write a game with two independent windows with two tanks, each in one window. From there I developed *Firepower* [a 16bit prequel to *Return Fire*] which was a top ten hit. Then I created *Galactic Invasion*, *Turbo* and *Mindroll* - which was a reinterpretation of C64 *Quedex*, by Stavros Fasoulas. I don't usually convert other people's work, but I so liked *Quedex* I wanted to see it on other machines.

"Anyway, then we did *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* for Amiga, PC, C64 and Apple II... the real magic there was we did all the formats in just ninety days! One of my key animators was Eric Daniels, who we hired away from Disney. It was on *Roger* that we developed software called *Onion* [after the animation paper used in conventional animation], because animators are expen-



sive and it was wasting time for him to draw on paper, and then scan each drawing in. *Onion* allowed us to create about 16 times more animation.

"*Onion* was later developed into *Disney Presents... The Animation Studio*. It also won an award from the SPA [Software Publishers Association], and is still used in movie houses all over the world to create videos, time animation, and create shorts. After that we worked with Commodore designing CDTV - we developed special video compression techniques which had to fit into the machine's ROM, and we created and designed the whole CD audio virtual control panel."

After that you seemed to take a break...

"Yeah, I took about a three year break. I can't really talk about the work we did then, it was for the government, education and private companies. It was nice. We worked fast, compared to other companies we seem to work a thousand times faster. We estimated one hour of our time was equal to about one year of another person's. We made a lot of money solving other people's problems - and I've got such a large network of friends there's always these calls - where people have been working for three to four years on a piece of software, and we've solved their problems in a day, literally a day. We look at the code and we fix it. A very simple analogy: we build Porsche race cars in a world where most people are Volkswagen designers. And once in a while someone comes to us and says, 'oh, my VW is broken.' So we walk over and say 'oh, this is it right here.' Because we're used to working on these incredibly complex, high performance engines it's so simple..."

"I'll take a small diversion here because recently I booted up my old C64 for reference. I like to believe you should use the worst example of a machine a game could run on. If you can make the game fun on a primi-

Profile

Baron Riechart Kurt Von Wolfshield is a man who turned his back on the hype and mega-riches of MTV and advertising to found Silent Software. Primarily a computer consultancy and utility producer, Silent also produces games like the awesome *Return Fire* (see pages 51-53). Years ago the company produced its 16-bit prequel and a string of other hit games, a hit Disney animation package, and even helped develop Commodore's CDTV. Its return to videogames was mainly prompted by the 3DO system itself.

live piece of technology, then you should be able to make that game fun on a more sophisticated piece of technology. I have a friend who recently bought an Atari 800 because he really enjoyed the games back then and he wanted to understand why. He owns the entire library of 3DO games (he's fanatical) and he thought so many are just eye-candy, which I agree with. On *Return Fire* the last thing we put in were the special effects..."

How would you compare *Return Fire* to old C64 games?

"We've become so sophisticated nowadays with the PC and Macintoshes we work on. With *Return Fire*, for example, we recently figured out printing its source code would use something like eight reams of paper with about 66 lines of code per page. We're talking about a stack of paper a foot and a half tall on your desk. For a computer game! And I can remember when games were just 8K. I wrote a 2K game once for an Altair! So the way to look at it is we've become like brain surgeons. Expert technicians for this sophisticated technology. C64 games were better thought out than most games of today. It is so easy to throw fancy sound and full motion video into games machines today. I call them 'Animated Slide Shows.' *Return Fire* was built with the care and consideration of the old days. You might say that it's an old fashioned game... destroy, destroy, destroy."

"*Return Fire* does not have an intelligent, computer generated opponent because it was primarily designed for two players. I want people to play against each other. I don't design computer games to play against a computer, I design computer games so that people can play against each other using the computer as the "board" on which to play the game. I would like to use more computer intelligence in the future, but not necessarily using the computer as an opponent - because there is no challenge. In a war game what's happening? You're targeting and firing. What's going to do that better, a human or a computer? A computer can win constantly, it's not a challenge, it's not fun. I think many more games will be like this in the future."

What are you working on now?

"Currently we're developing 15 products, including *Return Fire*. You're not going to hear about all of the products. Some are utilities which will be reviewed in PC magazines, who won't know about our games, so it's like two separate worlds we operate in, but I guarantee you'll eventually use one of our utilities even though you probably won't know it was by us. And all these projects were financed out of our own pocket, which is pretty unusual for a developer. That's one of the reasons we're getting into publishing our own software."

Who worked on *Return Fire*?

"Some of the people working on *Return* are Van Arno, who's the graphic artist, then there's Will Ware who's the programmer who did all of the programming. Alex Kasperavicius was the producer. And we're an odd group, all Lithuanian or German, all over six foot - a pretty ominous group, but we're all incredibly non-violent. Yet we're for the freedom of expression in entertainment, although we don't think we'll ever step outside the boundaries of what is acceptable. The tanks in *Return Fire* may squash people, but we hope we've done that in the most delightful way possible! It makes people laugh. Yet we're constantly appalled by TV. I can't even watch the news. It might seem like a contradiction, but that's the question; if you can separate real violence and what the game symbolises - which is just the game. I tell you when I first saw *Street Fighter II*, and to this day, I think this is an excessively violent game with imagery I don't think is acceptable. This sounds like a contradiction

with *Return Fire*. But permit me, take 100 women, bring them in a room, mothers alike, let them play both games and let them tell me what they say. I don't see any redeeming qualities, or intelligence, or even spatial comprehension in *SFII*. In *Return Fire* you have to comprehend in your mind, not merely on the screen, what your enemy is doing. Unless you do that, you cannot win."

How long did *Return Fire* take to program?

"That's a difficult question because everyone here works on what they want, pretty much whenever they want. *Return Fire* was a backburner project, just something we did in our spare time, because we had to wait for there to be a big enough installed base out there [for 3DO]. I mean I loved the machine from day one. It was ahead of its time when it came out and it's still ahead of its time."

"Anyway, *Return* took about two years in all; we played around with it a lot. It took us about three months just to develop the 'look.' It uses a lot of very tiny polygons, every vehicle, tree and so on is made up of polygons - everything. I estimate the 3DO is handling about 200,000 polygons per second, and we could go up to 230,000. If you look at *Return Fire* you see it rendering animated men and translucent shadows. Then if you look at the helicopter it's got a transparent cockpit and you can see the men in there. People keep on saying that 3DO can't do polygons. Right."

How would you say 3DO is still ahead of its time?

"Probably with an American accent. Okay, a couple of ways. 3DO is really a computer with a videogame machine output, whereas other machines are simply games machines. You see 3DO is really a philosophy, not just hardware. The inherent philosophy is: when you upgrade, it works... At the CES I went in the 3DO booth with all these machines and our game's running, then I walk down to this huge Panasonic stand and there are more machines with this huge projection TV display, and then I walk to the GoldStar booth. And it all works, all these different 3DOs, just like a VCR. This is awesome... oh, and there's the Creative Labs 3DOBlaster too!"

"Then there's the development environment. I can't really comment on the other systems, except to say I've got a Sega development system and doesn't seem to even run all of its own demos. For 3DO there's a solid compiler tool, audio tool and video tool. Also we use IBMs, Mac and Amigas all linked together with no problem (amazing, eh?). The hardware's really cheap, I got the development system for around \$10K... I've even got a CD mastering machine so I can put my game on disc for proof of concept. 3DO is just such a cool concept."

"They [3DO] also have great technical support. I have a problem and I get on the line and there's a real person there to answer a real question. I know some people think 3DO is a bit stand-offish, but that's not my experience and I know other guys, like Morpheus who're just a couple of guys with their first game (*VR Stalker* which is great for a first game), and they think the same. So it's not just because I personally know lots of people at 3DO. Besides which, it's such a kick ass incredible piece of hardware."

Do you think the base machine is powerful enough to establish the format?

"Definitely. Look at Sony's PlayStation. It's their first attempt. They're not a games company and the technology is based on what was available about a year-and-a-half ago. The Sega Neptune, basically the Genesis and the 32X mated, that's basically just a frame buffer. It is good, I am impressed with it technologically, but the sound is never going to be good enough if it's not full CD quality - you can get a CD player but then it costs more than a 3DO. And they've been working on that for

about a year-and-a-half too. So we all know what their technology can do. So let me put the question back to you: what do you think 3DO's team of top engineers and seasoned software designers have been doing since they released 3DO over a year and a half ago?

M2.

"Right. I saw the PSX. I saw the Saturn. I saw the Ultra64, and then I saw the M2 and literally my jaw fell open. I'm not making a joke. One of the people with me pointed it out and we joked about it. M2 is 'very impressive.' Especially because of some of the stuff inside that I know about. Which I can't talk about. And especially because of the price, which I also can't talk about. I definitely will support 3DO. There's no doubt about it."

"The designers of 3DO are old friends of mine (even graying). R.J. was looking forward to seeing what I could do with his hardware as much I was. He and Dave Needle design hardware from the perspective of software designers. It's just great hardware."

Will you do another game for 3DO? And will you redo games for M2?

"Oh absolutely, we'll do more games. We're doing some now but I can't describe them. As for re-doing them for M2, I don't know. All our 3DO games will run with M2, we've done tests, but M2 is so powerful that I think anything we do for it will be done from scratch. *Return Fire* is actually more a philosophy than a game though, it's like chess, so there might be another game in the same style for M2."

What other 3DO games do you like?

"There's a lot of eye-candy out there, but I like *Gex*, *Road Rash*, *Need For Speed* for 3DO. Although I have problem with *Need For Speed*, which is when you have the crashes everything goes into the slow-motion. I race, I average 100mph on surface streets, and I've seen real flips and everything happens extremely fast."

You think the standard 3DO could run *Need* faster?

"Sure, I think it could run a lot faster, definitely. I don't know the program well, I don't want to criticise the developers but I'd say there were at least three calculations they're doing that they don't need to do. One thing about 3DO is that divide calculations are very dangerous. Because it's a RISC chip and there's no divide function built-in you have to be very careful and do shifts instead of divisions."

How do you regard the software scene generally?

"There's a lot of these titles which I call 'GBG': Games Between Glass. Games like *Ecco The Dolphin* and *Mario Bros* games. It's like they're squished between panes of glass. I don't like those sort of 'games'. I like games with real depth, with substance. With 3DO the hardware can do real-time 3D. So why don't people do it? I'd like to see developers push themselves more. A lot give up far too easily, on all formats."

3DO Magazine



Chris Thompson

Artistic Intentions

After a string of huge 3DO successes, EA's confidence has past bursting point – the company even have stickers on their walls saying 3DO is EA – EA is 3DO. Sitting happily upon the crest of this emotional tidal wave is Chris Thompson, the European Marketing Manager at 3DO Europe, and we sent Derek Dela Fuente to chat to this justifiably happy man.

Do you think it was a mistake not to launch the 3DO world-wide simultaneously or, maybe with a larger catalogue of games?

3DO announced in January '93 that they would be at the CES with the system for general release – and they hit their target. From a confidence point of view that made the software developers very happy – Philips has promised their machine for a long time and it didn't appear, undermining their credibility in the process. In terms of scheduling then, the 3DO company did very well. An ideal situation for them would have been to have released the 3DO world-wide, on the same day, with a good catalogue of titles. A problem a lot of the developers got into was the difficulty with the operating system not being finalised until the last minute. This meant a lot of developers were working to old specs and didn't use it properly, while others that got the latest specs near the release of the machine had to rush their titles... Not an ideal situation but, even so, compared to other launches, still relatively brilliant. After all, by the end of 1994 every major territory had the machine – pretty good going.

Many UK developers were initially very enthusiastic about the machine but that waned slightly with reservations about the operating system. What do you think?

To understand 3DO you have to go back to 1983. Trip Hawkins has always had a vision of 'real life' in a box. He's an incredible visionary. Because he's such a respected figure he amassed a lot of support from the top guys in the US. There are now 400 developers working on 3DO. It's a highly critical industry we are within and that's good. Anything that shocks the developing community will make them nervous – and two things are making them so, Sony's PSX and Sega's Saturn. We, as a software publisher, will back the system we feel will be at the cutting edge of technology, and the 3DO is the machine we shall do it with. If we thought it wasn't the machine we would change. It's both a financial and

technical decision. We've never held onto old technology.

Regarding peoples reservations... I find that hard to believe – everyone's been impressed with some easy tricks you can do with the machine. I suppose any new system needs time to master.

Do you ever single out specific countries?

If we were to aim for a sole market then it would be the US or Germany – simply because they have a large enough market support. Both are also identical in the type of games they want. The UK and USA are the same when it comes to consoles. France falls between the two. The best approach is to have development teams in all the major countries like US, France, Germany and UK – which we do. The main criteria when producing a title is to do a projection on how a certain title will do in all the leading territories. But then I strongly believe that if a title is good enough it will sell anywhere. Look at *John Madden* on 3DO. Who would have thought it would be such a huge success in Europe?

***John Madden* is the program that really highlights the machine's potential. Where can you go from there?**

John Madden is simply a great game. The playability is excellent – even to people who don't like American Football. The video footage and interaction is just amazing. *FIFA* is as good. We've improved on an already perfect game with the camera following the player and varying angles to adjust play. Technically both of these programs offer such a realistic environment that you feel you are there. Many companies go for lots of video footage, fancy graphics, etc. The first thing we look at is the gameplay and everything else follows on. Of course, it is not up to broadcast quality but the AI is top notch, you have fully animated and digitised players, weather conditions, etc. It's merely a step below interactive TV.

What I can say in terms of future development is that the 3DO will soon be the leading machine simply because it's the most advanced machine. We shall write the game first on this machine, and then port them down to the PC and other machines.

3DO is designed to be a set-top box. Are EA working on any set-top box titles? How would you define a set-

top title and how does it differ from a standard PC product?

It's best to go back to VCR. Currently you can buy one for a mere \$100 or pay up to \$1000. Some have 4 heads, some can record from one machine to another, etc. That's a similar situation with 3DO. We've started at the low end. You only have to look at the computer analogy – Panasonic, Sony, etc. will offer a middle of the range system, maybe, and at the high end the 3DO user will go for the AT&T set top box. High end systems will be able to do everything that lower end systems can, but they'll also be able to function as the delivery for a variety of cable companies – down loading info, movies, video games. It's an information storage box that will sit on top of the TV. What products will be developed for this will be totally dependent on the capabilities of the networking systems that are going to exist. There will be the basic ones like modem play, but in terms of more complicated networking the exact technology that's going to exist remains to be seen. British Telecom are currently doing video on demand in 60,000 UK homes, so the process is beginning. Who knows where it will end...

3DO Magazine

Profile

Chris Thompson, an American, works for EA in their UK office, and is in charge of marketing games upon their release in Europe. Entering the EA fold in its early days Chris has now worked for the company for seven years in total – three in the United States and the last four in the United Kingdom.

Virtual Vegas

America's fastest growing city, the Mecca of neon, has to be the perfect site for a videogame convention. The last decade has seen the Mob's city turn into an adult Disneyworld with enormous new casino hotels themed after ancient Egypt, Oz and Treasure Island. Stuart Wynne reports from the future.

The Consumer Electronic Show has been coming to Vegas for over a decade now, growing even faster than the city itself with the videogames publishers crowded into huge tents out the back. Originally Vegas was picked simply because it's a good holiday resort, Blackpool on a truly insane scale, but as gambling becomes more accepted the city in the middle of nowhere has turned to ever more elaborate promotions.

Treasure Island has a pair of full-size galleons sail into battle, the English ship sunk on the hour, every hour, while the MGM Grand is the world's largest hotel with Oz inside and a theme park out the back. The Luxor is probably the most impressive though, a huge black glass pyramid with a roof-mounted searchlight visible for miles around. Inside it boasts a trio of pyramid themed shows, including a holographic display and a stunning VR experience directed by 2001's Douglas Trumbull. The latter uses Trumbull's own, amazing hi-res Showscan technology and is one of the most spectacular rides in the world, not that the majority of Vegas' visitors care...

Vegas' heart is still on a roulette table and 1995 is the year in which the videogames market plays for the biggest stakes yet. After hitting their home markets in December 1994, both Sony and Sega roll out their new machines in America and Europe this autumn. Nintendo promise their Ultra64 will hit America, and maybe even Europe in October, while Atari's Jaguar CD-ROM Drive finally arrives and maybe even Bandai's Apple PowerPC machine could appear. Billions and billions of dollars will be put on the roulette table to buy advertising, software support and, hopefully, market share. '95 is the year in which the two-year reign of 3DO and Jaguar as high-end machines ends. From now on the pressure is on for prices to fall, at last, as the real competition begins.

It's ironic that of all the new machines, the one with the most respected specs belongs to the system that started it all, 3DO. Its M2 upgrade gives 3DO a unique second bite of the hi-tech cherry. While the base model 3DO has established a formidable foundation, with well over a hundred titles, M2 will keep 3DO way out in front for performance. Dazzling M2 demos were on show to developers at the CES and the tech specs are well known. Walking around the show it was surprising how many developers, even non-3DO ones, had heard about M2 and routinely described it as the leading edge system. Even the mystery-packed Ultra64 was judged inferior by people actually developing for it. 3DO's future isn't certain, there were rumours about Panasonic being unhappy about profitability and certainly there aren't enough 3DO systems being made for the UK market, but while magazines continue to rave about the PlayStation, among developers its leading edge reputation has already passed to M2.



EYE OF THE STORM

Vegas '95 was a show in the shadow of things yet to be unveiled. The E3 Show in Los Angeles this May is to be the launchpad of PlayStation, Saturn and, allegedly, Ultra64 – all of which were kept under wraps at Vegas. With hurricanes tearing through Los Angeles, and Vegas as grey and rainy as Blackpool, the January CES was a show on the sidelines. 3DO should've dominated with masses of great looking new games, from the Doom-smashing *Killing Time* to the awesome *Wing Commander 3*. Unlike the dreary Sega stand, with its

walled off inner sanctum protecting a single, solitary Saturn, and Nintendo's resolutely 16-bit stand, 3DO drew real crowds. Not huge, but substantial nonetheless. If 3DO had been located within the game halls it could have caused a real sensation, as it was the company kept faith with its aspirations and was located in the multimedia hall – miles from the other games systems. In the main electronics halls, GoldStar exhibited its new machine with MPEG add-on, while Panasonic had a huge display with FZ-10s all over the place. If the future really is multimedia, 3DO's only competition is the ancient IBM PC.

>

> NEW AT THE CES

AMERICAN LASER GAMES

ALG blasted onto the arcade scene with a flurry of laser-spun bullets in 1990. While *Dragon's Lair* had used laserdisc for a cartoon with idiosyncratic joystick movements at key moments, ALG's *Mad Dog McCree* made the inspired move of adding a lightgun. Rather than unintuitive joystick moves, you simply shot the villains and avoided shooting the good guys to keep the cheaply filmed, live-action western spooling off laserdisc. Mess up, and the laserdisc simply leapt to a death scene. A brilliantly simple concept and a string of sequels have followed, plus diversification into home versions for Mega-CD, PC CD-ROM and 3DO.

ALG is actually licensed to use 3DO in its arcade machines and developed the first 3DO hardware peripheral – a lightgun, of course. At the CES a follow-up gun was announced with a connector allowing another gun to be linked up for two player ALG games from *Mad Dog II* on. Expect this around Spring time.

The suitability of ALG's games for anything more than a quick arcade blast is doubtful, but it's a problem the company is attempting to address. At the show it announced the acquisition of Quantum Quality Productions (QQP), also founded in 1990 but devoted to strategy games with *The Perfect General* and *The Lost Admiral* winning numerous magazine awards. Besides continuing to develop strategy games, QQP will apparently be expected to contribute 'strategy' content to ALG's arcade games. ALG President Robert Grebe described QQP's founder, Bruce Williams Zaccagnino, as a games designer on a par with Sid Meier, so who knows what ALG's next game will be like.

Also announced at the show was ALG's determination to develop interactive adventures for girls, principally aged 9-14, with a new division imaginatively titled Games For Her™. Two titles are expected for home formats in '95, including 3DO, beginning with *Madison High*.

ALG is also branching out by publishing games from outside developers; Morpheus International last year provided *VR Stalker*, a simplistic, but entertaining flight sim still awaiting a UK publisher.

Space Pirates: Join the Star Rangers, travel to the far ends of the universe, meet strange new life forms... and shoot them with your ALG Gamegun. (May '95)

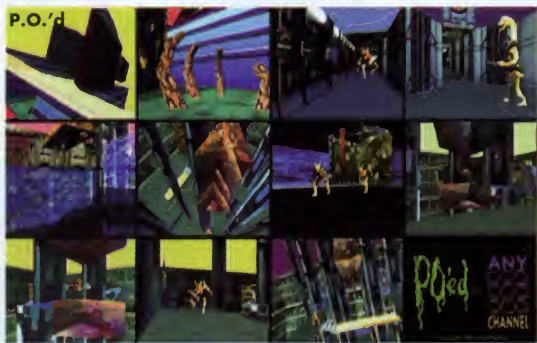
Drug Wars: Join the police force, explore the complex socio-political problems of foreign countries, meet poverty-stricken natives... and shoot them with your ALG Gamegun. (June '95)

ANY CHANNEL, INC.

This brand-new start-up company is mainly composed of ex-employees of Sun Microsystems. Unsurprisingly their expertise is in fast, 3D graphics...

P.O.'d: While the 'pissed off' title may seem rather adolescent, the CES prototype showed probably 3DO's most impressive 3D yet. Complex structures, featuring numerous scuttling aliens, moved about with impressive fluidity and speed, effortlessly simulating the first-person perspective of a jetpacking marine. The programmers even plan to add a move enabling the player to do a backflip! Now that's confidence.

The scenario is a cross between *Aliens* and *Under Siege*, with you as the cook of elite space marines unit on a routine 'bug hunt'. Unfortunately it turns into a 'marine hunt' which leaves you alone with help a minimum of three months away. Attack is, of course, the best



method of defence so you set about finding alien weaponry within a huge, texture mapped city of some 40 levels.

If this debut title lives up to its promise, it might not only leapfrog *Doom*, but indeed jetpack over it with considerably more dramatic gameplay. (Spring '95)

ART DATA INTERACTIVE

Based in Simi Valley, California, ADI may be just over a year old, but founder Randy Scott has been in the business for eight years making distribution deals. ADI's first release was superbly accomplished conversion of *Rise Of The Robots*, while for the future there's *Doom I & II*, both of which will have extensive, all-new FMV sequences besides numerous other enhancements including higher res graphics and stunning stereo sound.

Chess Wars: A Battle Chess for the 32-bit generation, this grafts live-action footage onto an advanced chess engine. Burning up around half a million dollars, the film crew shot no less than 27 different prologues and 134 battle sequences with a cast of eighteen, plus six stuntmen, three camera units and over a hundred extras! Preview footage at the show certainly looked fun, with some gory decapitations, while the actual chess game is claimed to outplay anything currently on the market. Most intriguing of all, is the fact the live action footage was scripted and directed by Paul W. Cooper, who's won no less than three Emmys – TV's equivalent of the Oscar.

CRYSTAL DYNAMICS

Established in 1982 specifically to exploit the emerging 32-bit technologies, primarily 3DO, Crystal has become

undoubtedly one of the hottest software houses around. At the show, their main announcement was Championship Sports, a new label intended to compete with EA's hugely popular EASN brand. The two games they had on show certainly looked able to give EA a run for their money.

Baseball game: Although still at a very early stage, the early graphics looked very promising. Filmed footage of the San Francisco Giants has been used to provide motion capture material for Silicon Graphics rendered animation. As a consequence the realism of the graphics was quite stunning and even non-sports fans should be tempted by this one. (March)

Basketball game: Rough footage from the prototype game looked very, very slick with five-on-five action à la *NBA Jam* – only with far more detailed, fluid graphics. It came as no surprise that Crystal had found it causing considerable excitement at Sega and Sony. (April)

CYCLONE

This small start-up company is the brain child of Helmut Kobler who used to work in 3DO marketing. He became so excited by the machine he left the company, in late 1993, to develop games for it. The first title due for release is *Captain Quaser*, which was picked up by 3DO for publishing in June 1994. A second, 3D action game is also in development and both will be shown at the E3 show in May. Kobler has a lot of support within 3DO and there's a good buzz about these titles, so expect more soon.

DIGITAL PICTURES

Company president Tom Zito has been on the cutting

edge of CD-ROM technology so long a cynic might argue it's rusted into historical irrelevance. While Digital was only formed in 1991, its core technology owes much to NEMO, an interactive TV system Zito and his colleagues developed between 1985 and 1988. As the company PR proudly boasts, Digital is 'the only company to create titles that are one hundred percent... full motion video.' Its games are shot like movies, often costing around \$2.5 million with fifty strong production crews and 'name' talent such as director John Dykstra (*Sewer Shark*), *Last Emperor* star Vivian Wu (*Supreme Warrior*), pop icon Deborah Harry and *Pet Semetary* director Mary Lambert (both *Double Switch*).

The resulting film footage is digitised using Digital's own, multimillion dollar DigiChrome© process and then engineered into an 'interactive movie' with InstaSwitch™ technology, usually quite smoothly glossing over the video branching points – that is, the points where the player actually interacts with game. While the gameplay is weak, *Night Trap* and *Sewer Shark* are arguably the worst UK 3DO releases yet, Digital was perfectly placed when Sega launched its chronically underpowered Mega-CD back in 1992. Digital's early releases proved Mega-CD games could look different to cart games and *Night Trap* provided the boon of national controversy. Actresses being menaced by aliens proved far more newsworthy than any sprites, however brilliantly drawn. The company's commitment to new 'new technology' can be judged by their first release for 32X – yep, it's *Night Trap* with enhanced graphics.

Supreme Warrior: The misguided 'interactive movie' concept is taken to absurd depths with this attempt at a beat-'em-up. *SFII* it's not. (Soon)

ELECTRONIC ARTS

The world's largest independent software publisher and a founding partner in the 3DO Company, EA continues to be a formidable supporter of 3DO with news leaking of a sophisticated snowboarding sim on the way for the end of 1995!

Immercenary: A surprise announcement at Vegas, this is a futuristic sci-fi blaster we'll have a full preview on next month. (Spring '95)

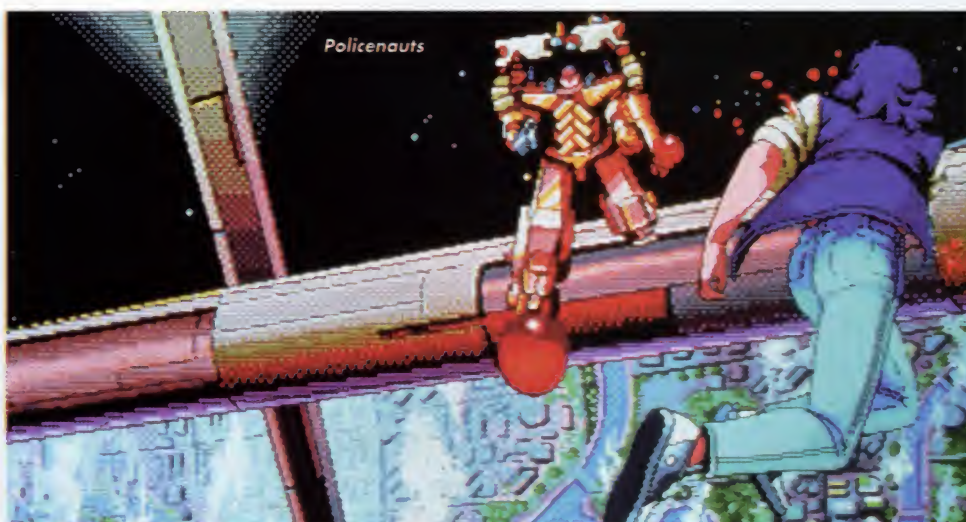
INTERPLAY

Established in 1983, by Brian Fargo, Interplay has carved out a formidable reputation for itself with a string of original releases. Of late it has enjoyed considerable success on SNES with *ClayFighters*, *Lost Vikings* and *Rock 'N' Roll Racing*, which inevitably attracted the attention of the corporates. In 1994 the company was taken over by MCA Universal, a subsidiary of 3DO partner Matsushita, with Fargo actually getting an office on the Universal Studios lot. Consequently, rumours abound of 3DO conversions of titles like *Lost Vikings*, plus some epic conversions of forthcoming Universal movies.

Cyberia: A first-person, 3D shoot-'em-up with the graphics streamed off disk like *Novastorm*, it's been relatively well received on PC. (Summer '95)

KIRIN ENTERTAINMENT

Founded just last year, Kirin is a division of the 15-year-old J.C. Research, a hardware manufacture specialising in peripherals such as joysticks. Their first, experimental title for 3DO was a conversion of the dire PC title, *Plumbers Don't Wear Ties*. This tedious failure at erotic entertainment gave the company confidence to take on real games. Besides the two PC conversions below, Kirin has a pair of action games in development using its 3D rendering process.



The Perfect General: This popular PC strategy game is being reworked for 3DO with the addition of 3D rendered sequences and stereo sound. (May)

The Grandest Fleet: A naval-minded strategy classic gets upgraded for 3DO. (August)

KONAMI

Although formed in 1969, it was only in the late Seventies that the company started its explosive worldwide growth, riding on the newfangled videogame craze. Games such as *Gradius*, *Hyper Olympics* and *Paradious* were not only huge successes, but also highly influential with *Gradius* in particular setting a style for shoot-'em-ups that is still heavily imitated. On SNES and Mega Drive Konami is, if anything, even more respected than in the arcades with a string of exceptional titles such as the *Probotector* and *Castlevania* series. The company also has a hi-tech division, its Kobe Development Centre, which among other things runs a network allowing up to 500 people to participate in race games. While a diversification into home computer games was an embarrassing failure – it's said Konami bosses simply couldn't understand how *Elite II: Frontier* could be over a year late – the company remains committed to new technology. Konami's sprawling adventures for the PC Engine CD-ROM are a particularly popular example of its innovative nature.

Policenauts: Although essentially a port of the PC Engine game, *Policenauts* is such an epic CD-specific title that it's doubtful anyone will complain. A manga-style adventure, with several action sequences requiring nifty sharpshooting, it's brilliantly atmospheric. A sequel to the smash-hit *Snatcher*, you play a policenaut

charged with breaking up an illegal trade in biomodes – human corpses kept alive so that organs can be taken from them for transplant operations. The game running at the show was still Japanese-language, but an English version is apparently in production and will probably cut some of the gore from the original. (Spring '95)

MECC

This educationally-minded software house is well established in the PC market, *Oregon Trail* being probably its best known title.

DinoPark Tycoon: Basically a variation on the *Theme Park* concept with dinosaurs instead of rollercoasters to manage. The financial planning is certainly educational, but whether it'll have the pizzazz to compete with Bullfrog's classic is open to question. (Spring '95)

MAGNET INTERACTIVE STUDIOS

This is a company with a cool reputation, originally beginning as an Apple Mac graphics shop before moving on to Silicon Graphics. Its main business is slick interactive presentations for mega-corporations, but recently it's started developing games. The original idea was for *Myst*-style adventures, but last year they took on five of MicroProse's top games designers making this a company to watch.

Icebreaker: A sci-fi action-strategy game.

MINDSCAPE/SSI

Both these American companies have a proud history of innovative game design, SSI being renowned for its sophisticated strategy games while Mindscape was >

> an early backer of 16-bit technology. Last year, however, they both become British with Mindscape being the first purchase of the enormous multimedia conglomerate, Pearsons, which also owns *The Financial Times*, a TV company and Future Publishing. As a consequence Mindscape/SSI have become major players and much will be expected of them toward the end of 1995.

Panzer General: Already heavily acclaimed on PC, this classic strategy game is being upgraded for 3DO with authentic WWII film footage, music and sound effects. The main campaign puts you in the distinctly dubious jackboots of a German general with an all new tank group. You must spearhead the German advance, from Poland in 1939 right through to American shores in 1945. Besides the overall campaign, there are 35 scenarios which can be played from either the Allied or Axis side.

The detail is incredible, with no less 350 unit types 'from Tiger tanks to B-17 Flying Fortresses', and hardcore strategy fans won't be able to resist. Judging from the playability of the PC version, even non-fans would be advised to give it a go. (April 1995)

Slayer 2: After the warm reception for the original, SSI have promised another is definitely on the way for late 1995. (TBA)

PANASONIC

The company behind the very first 3DO unit has proved surprisingly adept at picking up titles to support its system. With PC smash *Myst* on the way, and *SFII* already out, Panasonic is definitely a publisher to watch.

BIOS Fear: Biological Inorganic Operating System failure is the full moniker for this ecologically-minded strategy game. You're in charge of preserving Earth's last remaining resources, including its humans!, before total collapse. Developed by the tiny start-up Sense-Net, this represents an unusual pick-up for Panasonic. (Summer '95)

Fun 'n' Games: An oddball compilation of old classics. (Spring '95)

The Daedalus Encounter: This boasted probably the most stunning graphics of the show. Okay, it's just more FMV eye candy and all interaction was lost due to a last-minute glitch, but the scrolling demo still looked very good, very stylish and very interesting. If you must do FMV, this is the way to do it with real acting talent such as *True Lies* star Tia Carrere, movie-quality special effects and an imaginative plot. The latter has you as one of three survivors of an intergalactic war in the 22nd century. While you're encased in a mechanical probe, your friends Ari (Tia) and Zack are free to move around the alien spaceship you've taken refuge on. As you guide them around, numerous bizarre aliens and unusual hazards crop up presenting various novel puzzles. Boasting the unconvincing tagline; 'The Ultimate Interactive Science Fiction Adventure' it actually appears worthy of investigation - let's hope Digital Pictures take note for one. (Spring '95)

Wicked 18: Panasonic's slick golf engine gets reused for yet another round of 18. (Spring '95)

PIXIS ENTERTAINMENT, INC

Set up in February 1992, Pixis sees itself more as a 'technology company' than anything else. However, with titles such as *Virtual Vixens* and *Space Sirens* on Mac and PC, its current technology seems to have a distinctly 'adult' edge. The company claims more conversions of its PC output to 3DO are planned, although whether they'll ever see the light of day in the UK is uncertain.



Left and Below, Panasonic's *The Daedalus Adventure* was the best looking game of the show. Unfortunately only a rolling demo was available to see.



NeuroDancer: The scenario suggests a bit more wit than your usual 'adult' title with the player hacking into cyberspace to access glimpses of its eponymous characters. Whether or not there is actually any gameplay remains to be seen, although the company does profess to be interested in branching out into mainstream games eventually. (Soon)

PSYGNOSIS

Established as a cutting edge company, devoted to the then new 16-bit formats, Psygnosis has acquired a reputation for stunning intros and spectacular graphics. In 1994 it was acquired by Sony as part of its preparations for the launch of the PlayStation. Perhaps for this reason, the company has no plans to release any of its Japanese or American 3DO releases in Europe.

Lemmings Chronicles: It's ironic that Psygnosis's most famous game is by an outside developer, DMA, who are now committed to Ultra64. This latest *Lemmings* epic may well be their last, with the next 3D instalment being handled by another developer. (Soon)

ROCKET SCIENCE GAMES, INC.

Of all the videogame companies in all the world, Rocket Science is without a shadow of a doubt the hippest, most coolest of them all. Even without actually releasing a great game, as yet.

See, the thing with Rocket Science begins with the chutzpah of the name - 'hey, whiz-kid, you think you're a rocket scientist?' - to the best ads since Ultimate: Play

The Game, to the biggest collection of Names in videogame history. If you're a movie freak, how about Ron Cobb? - the design genius who sketched out the ship design of *Alien*, the cantina of *Star Wars*, Marscapes in *Total Recall* and underwater hardware in *Abyss*. Like special effects? How about Rich Cohen, the wizard who at ILM made you gasp over *T2* and *Total Recall*? Okay, maybe you just want videogame designers like Brian Moriarty (*Loom*, *Zork*, *Trinity*) and David Fox (*Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, *Zak McKracken*, *Labyrinth*).

It's a dream company, dreamed up by 26-year-old Peter Barrett, the techie Name who invented Cinepak while working at SuperMac, plus various other whiz kid stuff. When he left to set up Rocket Science, investors such as Sega and BMG were eager to invest millions of dollars. At the heart of Barrett's prospectus was a commitment to CD-ROM technology, hi-tech production and platform independence. As a close friend of many people at 3DO, and an admirer of their achievements, the decision to support the format was virtually inevitable.

All Rocket Science's games are produced using 'Game Science', which essentially consists of two software tools. 'Game Composer' is an application with which even the relatively inexperienced can sketch out a game design, optimising it to minimise pauses of CD accessing. When a game is complete, the 'Game Compiler' tool is used to rework it for the various different platforms. When the company announced it would release two games for 3DO, it essentially committed to adding a 3DO routine to Game Compiler. Barrett expects this to take around three months, after which 3DO conversions will be almost automatic.

Also unveiled at the show was *Flying Aces*, a WWI FMV spectacular co-developed with people behind Sega's *Tomcat Alley*. It looks fun, but Barrett admits the emphasis on FMV isn't ideal and mainly reflects the limitations of its initial target formats: Mega-CD and PC CD-ROM. *Rocket Boy* and *Darkride* show the company eager to progress. The former is an isometric arcade adventure, its eponymous hero rocketed onto a surreal planet packed with bizarre puzzles and hazards. *Darkride* looks even more weird, shooting the player into the screen at sixty frames per second - the fastest

update possible on conventional TVs. It's a rollercoaster ride through graphics which appear to have been lifted from an Acid house rave. And finally there's *Obsidian*, a Myst-style "techno-spiritual" adventure game with a truly eerie atmosphere. An impressive line-up for sure, but just a hint of what's to come once the 32-bit generation is established, promises Barrett.

Loadstar: The Legend of Tully Bodine: The debut title is a Digital Pictures-type FMV special, a *Sewer Shark* riff which has the player on lunar rails as he delivers dangerous contraband. For a game of its genre, the Mega-CD version proved fairly playable and Ron Cobb's design work is gorgeous. The company's wit also comes through in cut scenes such as the death sequence showing the player's face stripped down to a screaming skull! – and it should look a lot sharper on 3DO.

Cadillacs and Dinosaurs: The Second Cataclysm: Another into-the-screen, FMV-blaster, only this time the future is Xenozoic with you at the wheel of Cadillac, blasting its way through a dinosaur infested rainforest. Based on the hip Mark Schultz graphic novel, which has already spawned a coin-op, the visuals are distinctive and attractive.

RUNANDGUN!, INC

Founded almost three years ago, by a trio of graduates from Rhode Island School of Design, the company's main business is broadcast TV commercials and has plenty of expertise in 3D, computer and conventional animation. It's also diversifying into entertainment software and has worked with VictorMaxx developing games for their VR helmet. To get their own branded games out, the company has settled on 3DO for their debut title. Co-founder Tony Grossman believes it's a great platform with excellent support for developers like him. He sees his company's main advantages as its background in film production and narrative expertise – strong storytelling right through the entire game.

Duellin' Fireman: A spectacular looking 50:50 mix of arcade action and interactive movie. Tony describes it as "an action-adventure comedy with plenty of energy", all set in a weird, mutated environment. (Summer 1995)

'Another Project': No details on this one, except that it will be demo-ing at the E3 show in May. (TBA)

SPECTRUM HOLOBYTE

This American giant established a formidable reputation for sims with its *Falcon* series based on the F-16. Last year it bought up its long-time rival, MicroProse, and is a major player on PC. On other formats its been overly cautious, entering the Sega and Nintendo markets late. Its first title on 3DO was Sid Meier's *CPU Bach*, an almost foolhardy brave release so early in the system's life. *Star Trek* would appear a safer bet, but will it ever appear?

Star Trek: The Next Generation: A World For All Seasons: While hardly 'new at CES', its appearance proves a now almost legendary title is still in development at least. Originally slated as one of the early 3DO releases, even making a star turn on an *Equinox* program years ago, its release has proved as elusive as Spock's death. Holobyte signed up with Viacom in 1991 to produce *ST:TNG* videogames and have been careful to develop separate games for each format. If sufficiently successful each game, given its own episode-type title, could be converted to other formats.

As in the *Equinox* program, the 3DO version continues to be described as an 'interactive episode' with a branching plotline depending on player interaction. This sounds ominously like an FMV bore-athon, but also

promised are action sequences – such as full-blown space battle, and 'virtual actors' that are 'unique... in electronic entertainment.' Depending on which character you choose, the game apparently plays considerably different. It certainly sounds intriguing, but all that was shown at CES was a slideshow of admittedly great screenshots. (Spring '95)

STUDIO 3DO

The 3DO Company's very own software house is a relatively small operation, its early efforts such as *Monster Manor* and *Jurassic Park* being published by other companies. Of late, however, the decision has been made to turn it into a major force driving forward the quality of 3DO software development. While *Station Invasion* is an unofficial sequel to *Twisted* – a multimedia, multiplayer educational title designed to broaden the base of 3DO's appeal – the titles below are out-and-out action games. Written solely for the 3DO system with on-site advice from the system's designers, they look quite exceptional.

BladeForce: The 3D, jetpacking blast-'em-up that was *SkyVyper* has a new, improved title. No graphics on show at the CES though.

Killing Time: Not so much new, as renamed with *Time2Die* proving to already be copyrighted with someone else. It's still basically a *Doom* clone, although 3DO allows for far higher res graphics – as is best illustrated by shooting a zombie with the body's snap back reaction and arcing blood proving gruesomely realistically. The graphics look as good in play as the early screenshots. (Summer '95)

TAITO

Founded in 1953, Taito claims to be world's largest arcade manufacturer with 2,400 employees and turnover approaching a billion dollars a year. It may not have Namco's hi-tech reputation, but its commitment to gameplay is second to none with games such as the legendary *Bubble Bobble* series, *Pang* and the game which started the arcade craze: *Space Invaders*. For 1995 it plans to release games on every home format, including 3DO.

Pyramid Patrol: Originally a Laserdisc title, it spoils most of its graphics off disc with shoot-'em-up arcade action overlaid on top. Cinepak makes for reasonably sharp graphics, while the PR is unusually honest in admitting the game offers 'uncomplicated play for beginning players.' (Soon)

TIME-WARNER INTERACTIVE

Time-Warner is one of the world's largest entertainment groups and has its fingers in numerous multimedia pies, including a substantial share in Atari. Its Interactive divi-

sion was formed in 1984 out of Atari Games Corp, Tengen Inc and its own Interactive Group. Unsurprisingly with such a background, the division's first product was an arcade game...

Primal Rage: Already packing them in the arcades, this bloodthirsty beat-'em-up was designed as a corporate flagship which would be converted down to home platforms after its coin-op debut. The basic structure is a riff on *SFII* with seven dinosaur themed characters competing to rule the 'Urth'. The game's USP is its Ray Harryhausen look, the graphics being digitised from posing incredibly detail stop-motion models created by top Hollywood experts. The coin-op looks great and plays well, although when you launch a special move you do have to wait while it's carried out in suitably spectacular fashion. (Autumn '95)

VIVID INTERACTIVE

Despite its flaws, 3DO's FMV has won significant backing from the soft porn business which apparently sees it as adequate for digitised versions of their titles. Vivid is leading the way with no than eleven releases on the way, complete with titles such as *Naked Reunion*, *Steamy Windows* and the commendably direct *Sex*. Previous titles such as *Blonde Justice* had HM Customs concerned anyone could attempt to sell such tedious stuff, but they could yet manage to be banned.

VIRIDIS CORPORATION

Based in west LA, this is a 90 strong programming studio which has been around for five years now. Co-founded by an Englishman, Lee Barnes, it originally concentrated on CDi products with hits such as *Draw 50* – an acclaimed drawing packaging developed with a Disney animator. Most recently it finished *Zelda Adventure*, its first stab at an ongoing series by Philips based on the famous Nintendo character. Viridis' program is yet to be released, but has already been called the platform's best title yet by CDi magazine. In 1994, the company branched out into PC CD-ROM with games such as *Anatomy* and *Eco East Africa*. Viridis has also developed a proprietary 3D polygon system, *CyberCAD*, which is being used for several PC CD-ROM titles and both 3DO projects...

Dreamer: Although 3DO leaked the title at CES, Viridis still regard it as top secret while they negotiate with publishers. All they'll admit is that it's 3D and for gamers, not educationalists! (TBA)

'Project X': Another supersecret 3D project, signed up by GoldStar at CES and due to be finished by Summer 1995. (TBA) □ ssw

3DO Magazine





Goldstar

3DO GPA 101M

Publisher: Goldstar © 0753 691888 Price: £399 Available: May

And now there are two. The Panasonic FZ-1 3DO is to be joined by the smaller, sleeker Goldstar 3DO GPA 101M. Dave Westley compares and contrasts, finding little to choose between the two.

Because the 3DO Company are exceptionally clever, they don't actually manufacture the 3DO consoles themselves, but allow third parties to license the hardware and manufacture it for them. It's all part of an ambitious plan to create a video gaming standard, to wipe out the inefficiency of competing formats so that all publishers and developers can work on one format (theirs, naturally). Empirical evidence that licensing technology in this way will facilitate world domination isn't hard to find. What reigns supreme, with its claws into every business, and increasingly into every home? The PC of course. And who manufactures PCs? Everyone.

Unfortunately the PC is positively geriatric, incapable of playing state-of-the-art games, and so increasingly irrelevant to gamers wanting more than just the haze of VGA. It continues to be catered for because of one simple reason – the sheer volume of end users. Assuming that you're a businessman or woman with the primary intention of making money, which would you develop for – an under-powered, ageing format but with countless millions of users world-wide, or a young, powerful, thrusting format with only a million owners at the most? Obviously the former, the one that's going to leave your end-of-year, make-or-break, financial-report sitting snugly in the black.

So the fact that the 3DO was released in the UK with any games at all was impressive. That 50 or more games were nearly ready or actually released seemed to defy simple economics. Or did it? 3DO isn't only the 3DO Company, but the manufacturers as well. Companies that have already licensed the technology and are madly manufacturing the machines include both Panasonic (owned by Matsushita – the largest consumer electronics company in the world) and, most recently, the \$40 billion GoldStar (the second largest consumer electronics company in the world (probably)). And you don't argue with backing like that.

The first 3DO machine to be released was, of course, the Panasonic FZ-1, which, in contrast to consoles of the past, looks luxuriantly expensive. A matt black box and futuristic, contoured corners give it a highly distinctive edge. Added to its aesthetically pleasing externals is the internal, dual-speed CD-ROM drive capable of transferring over 300k/s and, of course, the wondrously ingenious technology of Needal and Mical.

The Panasonic FZ-1 was joined, in November, by the GoldStar 3DO GPA 101M, released, initially, into the US. It's now arriving officially into the UK, and lucky souls that we are, we've acquired one from GoldStar UK themselves. Though any room for improvements over the

FZ-1 looked difficult to find, GoldStar have actually made one or two adjustments to the basic design to allow for a slightly more coherent and robust machine.

Perhaps the most ingenious tweak is the creation of an internal area to plug the FMV module into (it has already been released in the States and it seems likely that GoldStar will be the first to release a FMV module into the UK). At the side of the GoldStar 3DO you'll find a flap that, when opened, reveals a small area complete with all of the relevant ports where the unit will fit snugly. Put the flap back on again afterwards and it will be completely out of sight – but not out of mind with all those films to watch. As well as being aesthetically more pleasing, it also removes the need for a second external power supply, as demanded by the Panasonic version.

The CD-ROM drive itself is slightly more robust than Panasonic's, and looks less likely to suffer wear and tear. Technophobes might be put off by the fact that you have to push a CD down quite hard before it sits on the 'spoke' properly, and that the 'reader' is exposed for all to see. That might make cleaning a little easier, but it will also mean the dirt will collect more quickly.

The most important thing about the GoldStar CD-ROM drive, however, is that its access time is faster – 250ms as opposed to 320ms. This doesn't affect the speed that a game will run (the transfer rate is the same) but how fast information pockets are found. A game will load up faster, as will FMV cut sequences. It isn't a radical change, but a welcomed improvement nevertheless.

The aesthetic differences are more pronounced than any technological ones. The GoldStar 3DO is two-tone grey with a silvery area surrounding the CD-ROM drive unit. The machine is smaller, more compact and slightly heavier. It looks more like something you'd include as part of a hi-fi system. Panasonic and GoldStar have gone for two very different 'looks' and opinion is split down the middle here as to which one is the nicest. The only part of the GoldStar system that we think is a little weak is the joypad, which has a nicer shape, but less responsive Left and Right buttons and a cheaper, more plastic casing.

In fact, there's so little difference between the two that people are more likely to be swayed by the bundled software, rather than any aesthetic or physical feature. The Panasonic FZ-1 comes with the respectable *MegaRace* and *Total Eclipse*. What the GoldStar will be packaged with has yet to be decided. In the US it's *FIFA Soccer* and *Shock Wave*, a line-up which, if repeated over here, may just give it the edge. □ dw

3DO Magazine

Total Control

Prepare to be bombarded by a wide range of new 3DO joypads, these first arrivals receiving the official, 3DO Magazine bench test...

Whilst the standard 3DO Panasonic pad (£39.99) is sturdily built and fairly friendly, it doesn't ingratiate itself to fervent button bashers with its hard-edged A, B and C buttons. Whilst most recent (and forthcoming) machine joypads have taken inspiration from the brilliant Super Nintendo pad, the Panasonic standard has ignored the smooth, bevelled edges that made lengthy sessions on games (such as *Super SFII Turbo*) so pain free. Like any successful new platform though, the 3DO is being swamped with ergonomic re-stylings, and this is just a peek at some of the forthcoming pads that should be coming over here. It's best hanging on until all these peripherals are available officially, as import prices can be prohibitive.

Flightstick Pro

Produced By CH Products, £TBA, Release Date: TBA

This uses an analogue rather than digital mechanism, which means that it's rather nifty for flight sims – the further you push in a direction, the faster and further the response – so this should complement games like *Wing Commander III* and *Flying Nightmares* rather well. It's an enormously heavy piece of hardware, the firm base making play sturdy with just one hand, and the finish is very pleasing. With three buttons and a trigger on the handle, throttle control on the left of the stick, centring controls on the right and four buttons on the case, this is great fun to use. A Y connector allows you to link with another joystick, and the whole thing feels gorgeous in play. However, we tried this out on *Operation JumpGate*, where the use of the left, rolling throttle dial for speed did cause some irritation if the shaft was moved too far to the left, effectively trapping the finger that's accelerating. Depending on its price this could be of great interest to flying addicts, but compatibility must be checked beforehand.

The 3DO Control Pad

Produced By 3DO, £TBA, Release Date TBA

Designed as a cheap second controller, dispensing with the chain port and headphones to provide an economy second-player pad. The triangular shape is fine to hold, and although the styling is rather ugly, with meaningless raised contours and bevels, it's very light and has a nice, smoothed cursor pad, which makes diagonals



much less painful on the thumb. The small, round, top left and right buttons are odd, but if this was offered at a price substantially less than the Panasonic standard, it would make a perfectly acceptable second pad.

GoldStar Pad

Produced By GoldStar, £34.99, Release Date: February

The GoldStar pad has the same, sleek colour and finish of the main unit (reviewed this month), and has the immediate appeal of being dramatically lighter than Panasonic's standard. Ergonomics and features are almost identical, with the GoldStar slightly more curvy and slimmer, but with more pronounced top left and right buttons. The A, B, C and Start/Stop buttons are smaller but fine to use, and feel slightly cleaner to jab at, with headphones, chain link and volume controls in the same positions. The only significant improvement is the cursor pad, which has a much shallower indentation on the cursors themselves on a circular, responsive disc, which makes diagonals easier to achieve. This certainly doesn't feel quite as robust as the military style Panasonic, the main casing seam around the centre of ours didn't seem that secure, but as a stand alone purchase, it's perfectly serviceable and enjoyable to use, and at the price, a great bargain.



Phase 9 F40

Produced By Euromax, £39.99, Release Date: TBA

This joystick is almost identical in shape to the standard SNES classic, with an upraised, responsive cross-shaped cursor, smooth, slim moulding and responsive buttons. Euromax have moved the shoulder buttons down onto the main pad, with an extra Start button also there, putting all six, colour coded and lettered buttons in two rows of three. Every button required for *SSFII* in easy reach, an immediate and welcome advantage



over the standard pad. The six autofire click switches are handy for performing basic moves repeatedly, but the slow motion facility (which works by flicking pause on and off, rapidly) is pretty hit and miss, and certainly didn't prove that effective on any of the games we tried it on. The lack of normal shoulder buttons must also be born in mind on games like *Need For Speed*, where the re-positioning of gear buttons on the pad face makes play almost impossible, but a second version of this joystick with shoulder buttons to address the problem is likely. With no chain link, two *Super SFII* addicts can't both use the F40, which is a shame, so if you're hooked on this particular joystick, hang on for a while and wait for a shoulder buttoned version to arrive at a similar price. It would be a better buy.

FZ-JJ1XP

Produced by Capcom/Panasonic, £29.99, Release Date: out now

This long awaited six-button joystick, designed by Capcom and very much trumpeted as the ultimate accessory to *Super SFII*, is absolutely gorgeous. Sturdily built yet very light, the novel, vertical position of the cursor pad shaft, with the six buttons positioned at a right angle, is an absolute delight to hold, with comfortable grip indentations down the back of the shaft. The button section is angled so that either thumb or fingers can be used, and whilst it takes a while to adjust, you'll soon be mastering that game with new found confidence and skill. The cursor pad is softer than the Panasonic, and very responsive with two extra Start/Stop buttons above the cursor, and the six control buttons intelligently positioned in two lines of three, with Left, Right and Play buttons on top. As with the Euromax pad, *Need For Speed* isn't going to work to well without shoulder buttons, but a significant improvement over the Euromax controller is the addition of a pass connector in a Y with the normal connector, so that you can join up with another Capcom pad, essential for fans.

This is great for most games once you get used to it – we enjoyed *FIFA* a lot on it – and at the price, it's both a bargain and the best custom pad around. □ mcw



3DO Magazine

Readership Survey

Well we've finished our second issue now and, by the time you read this, we will be well into our third - more than enough time for you to have cogitated and deliberated on the merits of 3DO Magazine. If you have any opinions about the way the magazine should be heading, please fill in this survey. We want to produce the perfect magazine for you and we can only adapt if we get feedback. Please send your surveys to 3DO Magazine, Durham House, 124 Old Christchurch Road, Bournemouth, BH1 1NF.

1. Your Name

2. Your address

.....

.....

3. Are you Male ☐ or Female? ☐

4. How old are you?

5. What is your occupation?

6. If you are a student, what are you studying?

.....

7. How much does your household earn a year?

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8. How do you rate the sections of the magazine

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Previews	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
News	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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9. Is there any other section that you'd particularly like to see?

.....

10. How do you think we could improve the magazine generally?

.....

.....

11. What do you dislike the most about the magazine?

.....

.....

12. What games are you most looking forward to being released?

.....

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13. Are there any features you'd particularly like to see?

.....

.....

14. What kind of games do you most like?

.....

.....

15. Would you prefer to pay £2.95 ☐ for a magazine with no CD, or £4.95

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16. Will you buy the FMV module when it arrives?

17. Would you like a VideoCD section when the module arrives?

.....

18. Would you buy a 3DO Modem?

19. Do you own a surround sound hi-fi system? If not, are you thinking about buying one?

20. Do you use your 3DO to play music CDs on?

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Creative Labs ☐

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25. Where do you buy your software?

26. Do you intend to by any of the following in the next 12 months:

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Cable ☐

Video ☐

Satellite ☐

Car ☐

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27. What daily newspapers do you read?

28. What Sunday newspapers do you read?

29. How many times in the last two years have you been abroad?

30. What travel company do you use?

31. Of the following, what do you have?

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Any other(s)?

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35. If you don't own a 3DO are you going to purchase one? If not why not?

36. Are you interested in purchasing any other console? If so, which one(s)

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Memory Matters

To enable players to save games, the 3DO has 32K of Non-Volatile RAM (NVRAM). Initially The 3DO Company regarded this as so generous – a CD32 has just 1K – that they couldn't foresee it being used up. Then came *The Horde*, with its numerous, memory-gulping save games and a memory editor program was

hastily cooked up. This comes on the disk supplied with your 3DO and is much more flexible than most of the memory editors many games come with – *The Horde's* only option is to wipe every single other game's saves! Panasonic's FZ-10 actually comes with a memory editor program built-in, but one drawback with them all is the

way the save files describe themselves. While *'NightTrap'* is perfectly clear, our own *Interactive Sampler* is rather obscure with 'S3'. So in association with The 3DO Company itself, here's our cut out and keep guide to NVRAM file names. You never know when it might come in handy.

NVRAM	File Name Description	Title Name
LaunchOrionOffroad S3P Slayer Game alone1.save acd.playlist cpubach CNBTESTSAVE RH_HAUZERJ MonsterManorDataMonster FireBall.JDW hand_ch4_reika_data MC_PKING_0 MC_PKING_0J EA_JMF94_JAP EA_JMFB94 EA_JMFB94_ jpieasyhighscores jpihardhighscores jpiimedhighscores jpisavedgames PIV_KURAM1J maddog NightTrap.02 nitetrap.inf KE_HAODEN_1J V_NONTAN_00J TE_PRCfg_J TE_PR_1J TE_Pebble_2J TE_Pebble_#1 MC_PUPPET_J REALPinball.JDW EA_RR1 PHARAOH1 Holmes3DOGames Holmes3DOSetup EA_SkWW0 sockid.hi sockid.save stellar7.dat stellar7.fame swc_game.0 swc_game.0e swc_highscore SY-TETSU-1J aaaaa.tim tim.cfg SC_GORAKU_1J hand_ch4_reika_data TE_Waialae_1 wsjr KE_WINPOS_1J	LaunchOrionOffroad S3P AD&D Slayer Alone 1 Save Audio CD&G cpu.dta Cras'n Burn RH_HAUZERJ Manor Data FireBall.JDW hand_ch4_reika_data MC_PKING_0 MC_PKING_0J EA_JMF94_Japanese EA_JMFB94 GREATS EA_JMFB94 GREATS JPI easy high scores JPI hard high scores JPI medium high scores JPI saved games PIV_KURAMA1J Mad Dog McCree Night Trap 02 Night Trap info KE_HAODEN_1J V_NONTAN_00J TE_PRCfg_J TE_PR_1J TE_Pebble_2J TE_Pebble_#1 MC_PUPPET_J REAL Pinball.JDW Road Rash 1 Pharaoh 1 Holmes 3DO Games Holmes3DOSetup EA ShockWave 0 Soccer Kid hi-scores Soccer Kid saves Stellar 7 Data Stellar 7 Fame SWC Game 0 SWC Game 0 SWC High Scores SY-TETSU-1J The Incredible Machine The Incredible Machine SC_GORAKU_1J hand_ch4_reika_data Way Scores WSJR KE_WINPOS_1J	3DO Interactive Title Sampler 1 3DO Interactive Title Sampler 1 Slayer Alone In The Dark acd.playlist CPU Bach Information CNBTESTSAVE Dr Hauzer Monster Manor Fire Ball Ghost Hunter Guardian War Powers Kingdom John Madden Football (Japanese) John Madden Football John Madden Football Jurassic Park Interactive Jurassic Park Interactive Jurassic Park Interactive Jurassic Park Interactive Kyoto Mysteries Mad Dog McCree Night Trap Night Trap Nobunaga Haouden Nontan Volume one Pararancho Incredible Machine Pararancho Incredible Machine Pebble Beach Golf Links Pebble Beach Golf Links Puppet Tales Real Pinball Road Rash Seal Of The Pharaoh Sherlock Holmes Sherlock Holmes ShockWave Soccer Kid Soccer Kid Stellar 7 Stellar 7 Super Wing Commander Super Wing Commander Super Wing Commander Tetsujin The Incredible Machine The Incredible Machine Theatre Wars Virtual Puppet Way Of The Warrior Who Shot Johnny Rock Winning Post

Wing Commander III

3DO Killed the PC Star

While *Wing Commander III* failed by a whisker to make it to 3DO Magazine for review this month, we've still managed to collate some vital information to whet your seemingly insatiable appetites. The following missive is from Brent Thale (Origin's technical lead on the project) and was discovered by our info-nauts, floating through the information superhighway.

We've noticed quite a bit of speculation about whether the upcoming 3DO version of *Wing Commander III* will be 'better' than the PC version. The PC and the 3DO are such different platforms that both versions have their own strengths and weaknesses. The PC requires a very expensive and powerful computer to run at its very best [a P60 minimum, with at least 8Mb of RAM for SVGA display], enabling it to do some really fancy polygonal graphics – like 800-face ship meshes, that the current 3DO isn't capable of doing so quickly. So, the 3DO version uses polygonal meshes that are texture-mapped in real-time, just like the PC version, but simpler.

"Other than that the 3DO version has a lot of features that the PC version doesn't have. All of the music in the 3DO version is CD-quality, digital stereo music, as opposed to mostly mono sound in the PC version. All of the cinematic sequences were mixed in Dolby Surround Sound for the 3DO version, while the space flight portion of the game uses a very cool, pseudo 3D sound system that places 3D sounds all around you, both off to the right and the left, even behind you – just using front speakers! Also, all of the music was re-recorded on our composer's favourite Kurzweil synth, giving the 3DO version more body and feeling, especially when compared to SoundBlaster on the PC.

"The 3DO version also uses 16-bit colour so there is less colour-banding and richer colour in general, while instead of green-screen VDU graphics you get full-colour. Since the 3DO standard uses all of the disc space on a CD, we were also able to include extra footage that had to be cut away from the PC version, including some plot-critical screens that explain why some characters do what they do in the game.

"You've also got the fact that the 3DO operating system was designed with CD-ROM in mind, unlike the PC's MS DOS. We can load graphics and sound while the player is doing something else, making the 'apparent' load times much, much faster in the 3DO version.

"The way people use 3DO machines is considerably different from the way people use PCs. 3DOs are in people's living rooms, hooked up to a decent stereo and big TV screens, giving the game more of a cinematic feel. There's also the fact that the 3DO version has no install program, you just put in disc one and play! No autoexec.bat, no config.sys, no extended memory hassles, no SMARTDRV, no configuration conflicts!

"Overall, both versions are excellent and fun to play and we hope people enjoy them both. The 3DO version will ship on 4CDs, probably some time in February."

3DO magazine also managed to track down Joye McBurnett, the project leader for *Wing Commander III* and asked her to compare the two versions. Like Brent Thale she agreed that while the PC had the muscle, all of the sophisticated and dextrous moves belonged to the 3DO. "In terms of raw processing power, the 3DO is no match for a Pentium PC. For this reason we had to reduce the number of faces on each polygonal object. However, when it comes to video, the 3DO is clearly the winner. The 3DO version features a screen resolution of 320x240 (interpolated to 640x480) and 16-bit colour

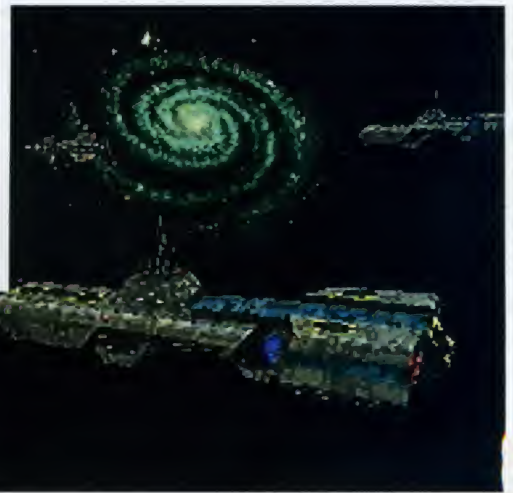
(65536 colours), while the PC version, in SVGA mode, provides a resolution of 640x480 and 8-bit colour (256 colours). Currently, the PC version space flight in SVGA on a Pentium averages around 12-15 frames per second. The 3DO version currently averages around 20 frames per second, and may improve before release."

So there you have it. The definitive childish question answered by the impartial experts. Both the PC and the 3DO system versions have their strengths and their weaknesses, but it seems safe to say that those of you who are looking for an integrated, cinematic experience would be best to buy a 3DO, a whopping great big television, a surround-sound hi-fi, a comfy sofa and then collapse to enjoy those pseudo sound effects whooshing to the left, to the right and even from the deep space behind you... □ dw

3DO Magazine



Every shot on this page is from the game, not the intro. Note the neat explosion and FMV on your cockpit display. As the Kilrathi rants at you, a reflection hits the screen.



Mystify Me

When it first appeared on the PC, Cyan's *Myst* set the adventure community alight with its breathtaking imagery and intriguing puzzles. The 3DO version is due out in the Spring, but Panasonic granted us an exclusive sneak preview to blow us away...

A lot of games claim to have created believable, alternate worlds, but few have ever created something as tangible and emotionally depth-charged as Cyan's *Myst*. To say that the game is composed of over 2,500 rendered images, 40 minutes of original music and 65 minutes of animation, goes some way to illustrate the intricacies that exist within its binary walls – Robyn and Rand Miller, the game's creators, apparently spent months designing the numerous worlds, sketching pictures and going over puzzles. Said Robyn: "I have always been very interested in the richness of things. We would build an incredible amount of detail into our models; include everything up to the tiniest screw or nail."

The first images *Myst* brings encapsulate that fact. The Miller brothers' world is so immaculate that no matter how many CDs Panasonic eventually duplicate, you can't help but think that you're the only person to have inhabited this perfect place. A tiny, intricately detailed bird swoops and circles in the distance, baroque, incredibly complex, perfectly detailed buildings surround you while a clear blue sea, light glinting off its mercurial surface, lies just to the east of you.

And all the while a tangled web of sound softly dapples at your ears – the bird cheeping, the sea lapping – all the more remarkable for the fact that the designers were originally dubious about the association of sound and computer games: "We didn't want music interfering with the gameplay. When we finally did a couple of songs, though, we realised it didn't have to sound like *Super Mario Brothers*."

A quasi-graphic adventure, *Myst* features no people as such, the player is left to roam seemingly deserted

worlds, only occasionally meeting disembodied voices through the various books he/she discovers. The game begins with such a voice, detailing the loss of a heavy tome and its subsequent fall into 'the wrong hands'. You actually watch the book floating ever downwards against a sea of black, its flapping pages illustrating the words of the narrator. Eventually it lands and the pages settle on an isolated picture. Your cursor becomes free to roam and the player can click upon the picture, zooming into the weird, yet wonderful world of *Myst* through this magical process.

Such books are at the game's core. Through them you travel into new worlds, meet more disembodied characters and generally attempt to make the unfathomable, fathomable. They also provide access to all-important information, notably that the various worlds of *Myst* were created by Atrus through his writing. You'll also discover that Atrus had a wife, Catherine who, through her feminine intuition no doubt, was wary of his creations. There were also two sons, Sirrus and Achenar who, we later find, have caused a great deal of trouble and are now imprisoned in two large books in the library. The odd thing (or one of the odd things) is that no matter how much you're told within these weighty tomes – you never feel as though you know anything, discovery and understanding always seems a problem away.

Gameplay within *Myst* consists of puzzles, or more specifically IQ tests, just as idiosyncratic as the game's graphics. The solution to each of the tasks is dependent



upon working out and performing sequences, and layers of other problems and riddles, each connecting and interweaving to enable you to keep moving. Sometimes you'll think a particular problem will never end, before one simple crowning act sets off a chain reaction and you're thrust into the next, exciting alternate world of *Myst*.

On the PC, *Myst* set the adventure world alight. LucasArts may well have produced the definitive graphic adventure in *Day Of The Tentacle*, but Cyan just created their very own principality from nowhere, subverting what had been done before and creating a rival, twisted genre of their own. A truly rich experience, all gamers-players worth their salt should give *Myst* a try as soon as they possibly can... □ dw

3DO Magazine



Cyan have somehow made each still look as if it's a 24-bit image. A lot of problems revolve around clocks, right. Getting the correct time on this one will produce a bridge for you to travel on.



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3DO Magazine ratings:

★★★★★ **Highly Recommended**

A particularly stunning title, bound to please everyone

★★★★ **Generally Excellent**

A very impressive game that most people will love

★★★ **Very Good**

A solid, playable game which is good within its genre

★★ **Average**

May appeal to some, but approach with caution

★ **Poor**

A badly flawed title

Here at 3DO Magazine, you can be sure our scores are delivered after hours of painful deliberation, often with experts from other magazines called in to help on specialist titles.

However, they are only a guide and we're not infallible: other people may have different opinions. You should also remember we are a totally independent magazine and our opinions should in no way be presumed to reflect those of The 3DO Company.

Highly Recommended
3DO
Magazine

Demolition Man

Publisher: Virgin © 0101 7148338710 **Developer:** In-house **Save Game:** Password system **Price:** £49.99 **Available:** Now

Although the lavish production of *Demolition Man* is very much next generation – the first videogame to use the feature film's actors in special scenes on movie sets just to be used in the game – the format is reminiscent of the mid-eighties, 8-bit megagames pioneered by Ocean. It's composed of multi-format compilations with a variety of different genre types linked only in narrative (anti-actor Sly plays John Spartan, the heroic pursuer of super criminal Simon Phoenix – Snipes – both exiles of the twentieth century enjoying the wonder of the next millennium via cryogenic freezing). The idea that everyone's bound to like at least one of the games available is understandable and with a tie-in to such a big hit, it's unsurprising that Virgin should be wary of alienating any particular genre fans – road race game, beat-'em-up, *Doom*, *Op-Wolf*? – the B-movie action throws up many game possibilities, so Virgin have plumped for pleasing everyone with all four of the above.

More than any other game, *Demolition Man* is packed with long scenes lifted out of the source movie – from the Blade Runner rip-off intro to endless snippets of action as reward for completing each section – and these add immensely to the atmosphere. The specially filmed sequences – with Sly wandering around roof-tops and the like – are also very well done, and go some way to convincing the player that this is a harmonious homogenisation of action.

It seems unwise, however, that the first couple of levels to play are all *Operation Wolf* style games, as how-ever compulsive this type of action can be initially, it's still, essentially, extremely simplistic, and the cursor pointing blasting soon becomes wearisome. Despite the excellent quality of graphics, with brilliantly animated foes shooting and throwing grenades, an impressive end level spacecraft hovering above the horizon it's not the sort of thing you really want to play on a drop-dead 32-bit console, so it's a pleasant surprise when the action moves into a *Doom* variant. But whilst the graph-

After the Mega-CD port disappointments of *Nightrap* and *Sewer Shark*, Virgin have bounced back onto the 3DO with an extremely expensive, and superbly produced license in which every last dollar spent can be clearly seen. This is the future of video games.

ics here are of a high standard (although not as fast or smooth as *Slayer*) and the atmosphere is perfectly conjured with superb sonics, the gameplay isn't really exciting enough in itself. You must follow Snipes through the large, anonymous tunnels, wiping out batches of soldiers as your energy is slowly diminished. Yet despite the superb presentation, play is, again, rather simplistic, with no objective other than getting to the end alive. The soldiers overpower through sheer numbers rather than tactics, and the fact that Snipes can take pot shots at you but not be blasted himself is hugely irritating.

Frustratingly, technically, this is almost outstanding – the portable scanner that can be pulled up is nicely done, the sound is unbelievable, with Phoenix's laughter and taunts pulling you into deeper play – but there just isn't enough involvement or variety to make play convincing.

Similarly, the beat-'em-up and driving portions of the game offer little in the way of interaction. The one-on-one fighting section is sub *Rise Of The Robots* for sophistication, with basic kick, punch and jump moves all played at a very slow pace. The setting, on top of two fast moving cars, is well realised, but play is tedious. Again, the high quality of the graphics and soundtrack only serve to emphasise the rather shallow gameplay. The driving section boasts smooth scrolling and delightfully rendered cars, but although the premise is a chase, in reality, there's little to do other than avoid traffic.

With each game type then, the excitement generated by progress is significantly dissipated by the realisation that nothing's quite as good as you'd hoped. Certainly, there's no game here that could stand up by itself (although a simultaneous two-player option on the *Op-Wolf* sections would have enhanced the package enor-



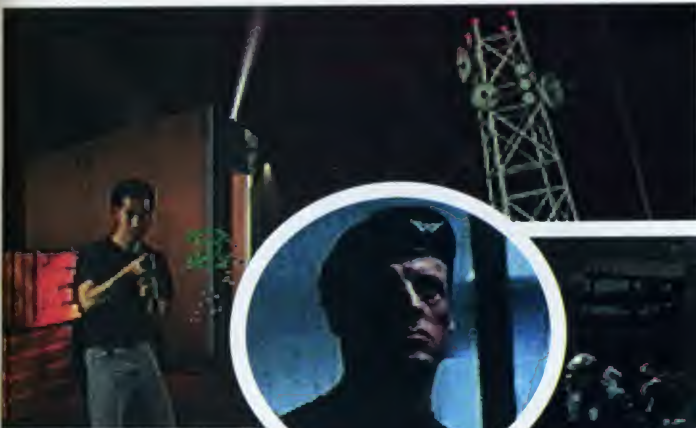
Many sections of the game are connected via small, digitised sequences especially filmed for the game. Sly looks rock hard as he poses and struts around the place, and all these sequences are very slickly directed, adding enormously to the atmosphere.

mously), but it's a testament to the skillful interweaving of footage and stylish burning fades that this package remains so impressive, although in ambition rather more than realisation.

This isn't to say that *Demolition Man* is bad, however. Whilst each sub-game is rather simplistic, this doesn't mean they're not engaging, and throughout, the sublime presentation and unbelievable techophile gloss make play a curious combination of wonder and disappointment. This is how games should look, and sound, and certainly, the anticipation for seeing new bits of footage is a successful hook to battle on through some pretty tough levels (even on the easiset setting, the rooftop and tunnels sections are seriously challenging). Throughout, you constantly feel aware of being involved in a big time production, and fans of the trashily entertaining source flick in particular should be well satisfied by this slick, faithful licence. As an engaging promotion for the movie itself, *Demolition Man* serves Virgin and Warner Bros. well – this has set the standard for technical achievement in movie tie-ins, few films having been so faithfully re-worked into a videogame with so much attention to detail. However, those optimists expecting a collection of games equal to *Need For Speed*, *Slayer* and *Super SFII Turbo* will be disappointed. The only genre that *Demolition Man* excels in is the light gun department, where play is considerably more fun, but *Demolition Man* remains very much an enjoyable jack of all trades but master of none. □ mcw

3DO Magazine rating: ★★★★★





Above right and inset, the shooting gallery action boasts some fantastic sprites, which are all the more fun to kill due to their realism. The beat-'em-up sections, right, are equally impressive visually, but less fun to play.



The car chase, below, is less than thrilling, but nice looking. Another atmosphere piece, right, that's quite stunning.



The roof top, above, provides some stiff competition, even on easy setting and it takes some considerable practice to progress to the tunnels, right. The hand scanner is a nice touch.



Another fight scene, left, identical to the earlier one in play, but featuring a more flamboyant setting - on top of two fast moving cars. Again, the graphics are quite gorgeous, and compensate for limited gameplay.

Family Feud

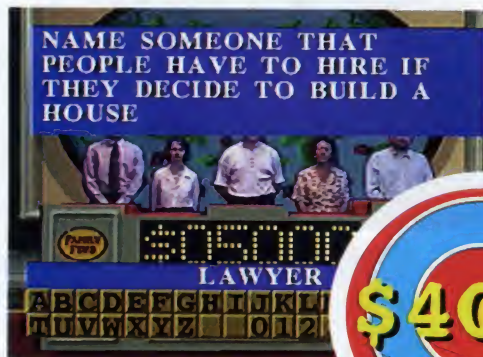
Publisher: Gametek © 0753 553445 Developer: In House Save Game: 4 SRAM Slots Price: £39.99 Available: Now

Twisted showed how it should be done. A hugely innovative program, it dispensed with the mundane way game show games had been handled in the past, concentrating instead on current technology to create an almost surreal landscape of FMV, Silicon Graphics and chromakeyed actors. Not just a pretty face, Electronic Arts also journeyed deep into the very brains of the genre, re-working the typical questions associated with quiz shows into an atypical multimedia extravaganza. Dispensing with text-based questions, *Twisted* used the 3DO's graphic capabilities to create a mass of sub-games that could be played by anyone, anywhere – games which transcended cultural and age boundaries. There was a 'sliding tile' variant, for example, only all of the tiles were part of a FMV movie...

Gametek, ignoring the innovations made by Electronic Arts, have adopted a depressingly literal approach to the genre. *Family Feud*'s questions are not based upon something that the contestant can get wrong – history, politics, etc. – but on the subjective responses of the general public on various issues. Thus you might get asked: "What do you do on Sundays that you don't do on any other day?" and you have to guess the most typical response – like go to church, read the paper, go for a walk, etc.

Any game that so strongly relies on the responses of

One of the worst things in *Family Feud* is that there will be words that you simply won't have heard about – making the game impossible to win.



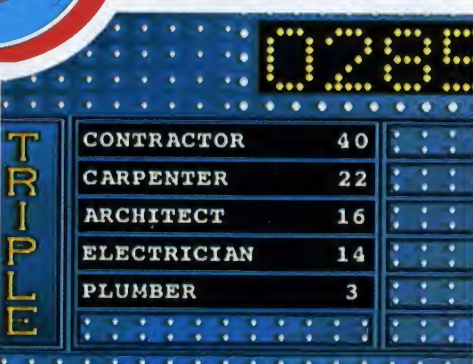
On the PC, Gametek are on a roll. Not only have they managed to get Dennis Hopper to star in their latest game, *Hell*, they've also released an inspired *Doom* variant, *Quarantine*, and a nifty space game, *Star Crusader*. With such success stories, hopes were high for their first 3DO system release, a license of the US show, *Family Feud*.

the general public is obviously going to be culturally specific. The Americans and the British might well share a common language but, judging by this game at least, while they say *potarto*, we chirp *potayto*. Not only do the American public give weird responses to most questions, they also seem to have a large vocabulary that's simply missing from ours. Knowledge is assumed about US TV: "What's the best night in for TV?" and American sports: "How long does a Football Pro last in the major leagues?" The most common culturally specific reference of them all, however, is made to US states: "What state is known for its abundant prairie land?", for example. Naturally winning, even in 'extremely thick' mode, is nigh on impossible.

Yet even had Gametek gone to the extra effort of taking straw polls from a British audience this game would still be a pretty dull affair. There's none of the imagination of the truly twisted *Twisted*, and none of its flair.



Below: To win a round you have to guess every answer the public gave



Just one of the many questions that a British player is unlikely to be able to answer.

Whilst the presenter of EA's game subverted and parodied every host before him, Gametek merely mimic the cheesy dialogue of the true-life show. Indeed, while the presenter of *Twisted* ran about, shouting and screaming, alternately cajoling and cheering on the groovy competitors, the presenter in *Family Feud* only ever stands in the same place and consists of just 3 stills – one for reading the questions, one for telling the player whether he's got an answer right or wrong and one for clapping. Sad and pathetic, instead of laughing with the game you end up laughing at it – naturally not a good state of affairs.

There also seems to have been very little effort put into the game's scenery. While *Twisted* offered a dazzling variety of multi-coloured sets and props, in *Family Feud* you're offered the same three in an endless, repetitive cycle. The result? The game looks as cheap, plastic and 70's (in a brown flare's kind of way) as the real thing.

Last but by no means least, the game lacks the immediacy of a true gameshow with the means to answer any question restricted to typing in a response. While *Twisted* allowed you to instantaneously respond to a question by clicking upon an icon, for example, here you have to spend an age moving a cursor move back and forward, clicking on the letters that make up the word that you want. In the slick, crafted API multimedia age, *Family Feud* has no place – and can be of interest only to the masochistic sociologist attempting to understand the seemingly disturbed American psyche. □ dw

3DO Magazine rating: ★

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Shanghai Triple Threat

Publisher: Activision © 081 7429400 **Developer:** In House **Save Game:** Password **Price:** £TBA **Available:** Feb/March

This oriental variation on dominoes, invented at the turn of the century, is a popular game for gamblers across the world, and variations on it have appeared on most consoles through the years (Activision's SNES adaptation was very popular). Whilst fans of the game will be pleased that EA are launching a 3DO version, they may be disappointed at the fairly tame version on offer here, with none of machine's capabilities stretched in any way to enhance this visually undramatic board game. With so many visually outstanding, innovative re-workings of tried and tested game types on the 3DO (*Road Rash*, *John Madden*, *Fifa International*), owners have justifiably become expectant of superlative eye-candy on even the most jaded genre releases. But if you have a puzzle game of the stunning simplicity and addictiveness of, say, Tetris, lame aesthetics can be forgiven, and the *Shanghai* series of games certainly has the world fame to build high expectations in novices.

At the beginning of a basic game, 144 tiles appear on screen, some on top of each other in up to four piles. Although initially, all these tiles will be bunched together, later on, small islands dissipate to the corners of the screen. Each tile has a symbol (traditional mode offers the usual Mah-Jong pattern, but Zodiac icons, musical instruments or flags of the world can be selected, according to which is easiest on the eye). The object of the game is to identify and select two matching tiles, causing them to vanish, a total absence of tiles resulting in Game Over. The difficulty is that only unblocked tiles

Simultaneous two-player games are always welcome to alleviate the solitary pastime of gaming, and this cult Activision puzzler is as welcome on 3DO as it's been on previous systems.

can be selected – those that are either on the outside edge and not partially covered or any tile that can move left or right without disturbing another – and whilst this premise takes a while to grasp (for me at least), it soon becomes instinctive, and you merrily lower levels and disintegrate tiles until you suddenly can't find any more matching ones, and get stuck again. Pairs must be selected strategically, as dissolving unimportant tiles can leave top layer blocks fixed, covering a pyramid below and effectively jamming progress. To make life easier, there are three undo credits available, and should you fluff up and completely foil progress, you can re-shuffle all the tiles and carry on. An arcade mode makes things more difficult, by shuffling neighbouring tiles into the space of any dissolved pairs, effectively mutating the pattern at every turn.

In one-player mode, you can struggle away at your own pace, or try to progress against a time limit (which is tough). Each level completed moves you on to another background, the ultimate aim being to navigate across the 30 levels that make up the Great Wall Of China, the monochromatic stills of which provide the background to the action.

This package has drawn together a wide range of *Shanghai* variations though, to provide the most comprehensive console 'dedication' to the game ever, and a good value package for puzzle fans. As well as the arcade and original mode, there are four different tile games, Beijing, Great Wall, Golden Tile or Classic Shanghai. Beijing features sliding tiles, Great Wall has tiles falling from the top of the screen to replace matched pairs and Golden Tiles has, well, a hidden, golden tile which must be reached first.

Whilst all are good fun in single player mode, it's with two players that *Shanghai Triple Threat* really comes into its own, providing the sort of simple, utterly addictive and competitive play that prevents you from leaving it alone. There's no doubt that this could have been radically re-worked for 3DO, with more interesting tile patterns and flashier backgrounds, but it's arguable that the engrossing format demands some restraint, and whilst the tiny patterns can become an eyesore, all in all this is an enjoyable package that's a must-have for puzzle fans, but still recommended for anyone with two joypads and a friend who wants some intense competition.

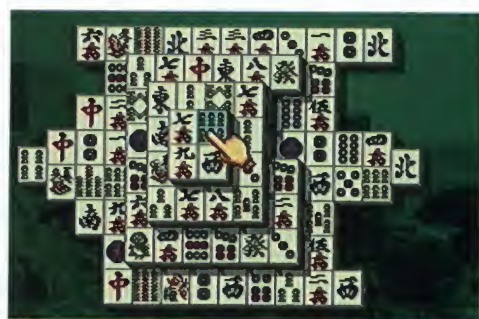


Puzzlers traditionally get a rough deal due to their inevitable lack of visual sumptuousness, but *Shanghai Triple Threat* has a strong enough source game design to lift it above more transient novelty titles, and if you can be persuaded to taste its distinctive oriental flavour, you should be engrossed for a very long time. □ mcw

3DO Magazine rating: ★★★



The two-player games are tremendously frustrating but great fun. You can't stop looking at the scores!



It's all rather daunting at first – whichever symbols you choose, there always seems to be far too many.



Iron Angel

Publisher: TBA © N/A Developer: Synergy Save Game: 4 SRAM Slots Price: £TBA Available: TBA

The most immediately enjoyable attraction of *Iron Angel* is that you play an immoral, nasty robot on the side of anarchy and destruction, serving a mad, fascist scientist in his quest to destroy the world – it's much less pressure than saving the world – and this unusual narrative is brilliantly unfurled by yet another, drop-dead gorgeous 3DO FMV intro sequence that smacks of fine art more than main stream videogames, a stunning concoction of brilliantly choreographed action that really pulls you into the game. It opens with a seductive flyby of an anonymous, Japanese cityscape, neon lights twinkling and blipverts blaring, before you're drawn towards a video monitor, the face of your superior, the mad scientist, staring blankly at you.

There then follows a bizarre and wonderful pseudo re-birth sequence, with your robot's form bathed in light, spinning through a void, delightful ambient music melding with despairing screams and synthesiser riffs, creating an intro that actually engages, emotionally. When the game itself opens, you're fully prepared to be absorbed in a genuinely powerful game experience.

The fact that this is a *Doom* variant would appear to be in its favour – I'm no fan of the genre, but the first person perspective is undeniably involving – but *Iron Soldier* disappoints immediately due to the poor screen update, which is very poor when compared to *Slayer* or *Demolition Man*. If the screen was bursting with wide, monster-packed levels and extravagant locations, this would be excusable, but *Iron Angel* is set solely within the confines of a claustrophobic, metal, prefab tower block, with narrow, low corridors and small, empty rooms, although the ceilings and floors aren't rendered, which damages the penned-in atmosphere somewhat. Also damaging is the width of your robot. Although the view is first-person, your shoulders feel wider than the doorways, and this, combined with the jerky scrolling, makes progress slow and awkward. On the intro sequences, your robot is a brilliant hybrid of 80's, Transformer style super weaponry and Iron Man inspired nuts and bolts, beautifully rendered, but in-game, you never 'see' yourself, just a cluttered, jumbled view screen with your

You can tell how seriously the Japanese take videogames by the amount of money and effort applied to the intro of *Iron Angel Of The Apocalypse* – very seriously. They're intense, those Japanese guys...

gun arm hovering at the right and a static cursor sight, and it's a shame the action never pulls back to show yourself, as was pulled off in *Virtuoso*. The importance of the intro sequence to build atmosphere for this game becomes clear as further play reveals more, glaring inadequacies.

Although *Iron Angel* bills itself very much as a role-playing game, there simply isn't enough interaction here to really compensate for the awkward control system. Lifts interconnect the many floors, store rooms offer new weapons, extra shield energy and save game positions and there's maps to collect revealing floor plans, but the environment is sparse and rather dull. The ultimate objective of collecting puzzle pieces is a rather lazy incentive inducement, and they're inevitably left lying around, protected by a baddie or two, with no real adventuring required, just exploring stamina. The baddies themselves, small, Dalek clones who attack mindlessly, are nicely rendered but ridiculously easy to pick off, and to anyone used to the variety of *Doom* will seem dull in comparison.

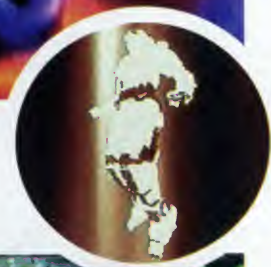
However, there's no denying that this game does exert a certain pull, partly due to the excellent, atmospheric sound effects – dull moans and wails, a sense that there's something going on just around the corner – and partly due to the repetitive nature of play. Maybe it's just the sustained impact of the awesome intro that builds the game up so effectively, but for all its inadequacies, there's a sense of self-importance about *Iron Angel* that, although completely at odds with the rather poor programming, gives the game a genuine aura.

Definitely not for everyone, but sci-fi freaks may get some pleasure if they invest considerable time into this curious release. □ mcw

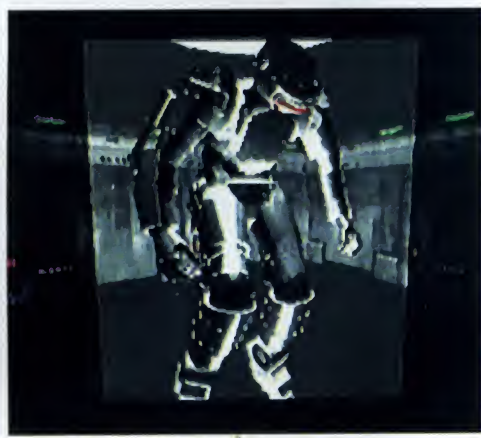
3DO magazine rating: ★★



The mad scientist, above, or is it the programmer himself, who's apparently a guru of multimedia art. Right, the art itself, which is good.



Above, a moron droid gets off a shot before being toasted by your rather sad pellet gun. Below, the disembodied limbo you occupy before game commencement. The graphics go downhill fast.



Rebel Assault

Publisher: Electronic Arts © 0753 549442 **Developer:** LucasArts **Save Game:** Passwords **Price:** £44.99 **Available:** Now

The sensational impact of LucasArts' first CD-ROM-specific release isn't difficult to analyse. A lengthy FMV-intro consisting mainly of Star Wars movie footage sets the scene perfectly, whilst the pristine CD-quality music and sampled sound effects are awesome. The game itself promises to take the player from training missions on Tatooine to a death-defying assault on the Death Star itself.

As you might expect (fear) of a groundbreaking PC CD-ROM game, *Rebel Assault* is an FMV-special with all the graphics pre-rendered and streamed off disc. On the positive side, LucasArts have at least made a real effort at disguising the game-style's limitations. The FMV is actually bigger than can be displayed, giving the player an illusion of control as joystick movements alter what's seen on screen. The game's structure is similarly innovative: rather than simply dropping a few into-the-screen blasting sequences into a montage of film clips, there's a real effort to cram in lots of game types, with an impressively varied range of settings and vehicles, drawn from both Star Wars and Empire, plus all the unfiled back-history – it's a real fans' product.

The game begins with the player's character, either male or female according to choice, flying training missions such as blasting through an asteroid field, zipping through tightly twisting canyons in an A-Wing and so on. There are over twelve missions in all, loosely formed into a narrative which includes a prolonged Hoth sequence where you battle AT-ATs, chase Probots through caves and get out on foot to shoot stormtroopers. Most of the missions are into-the-screen blasters, lots of targets to shoot and plenty of dramatic manoeuvres with arrows pointing the way to go. But there's also several overhead view blasters and the stormtrooper level is good fun in particular, if only because it's a pleasant change. The stages are all quite long, but when you finish them a password provides a welcome reward.

On the PC, all this variety and the superlative presen-

Masses of FMV, rapid-fire action and John Williams' soundtrack have made *Rebel Assault* the spearhead of PC CD-ROM driving. But does it really have the Force? Retrospective criticism of the PC original has called into question the actual quality of gameplay present in this tie-in extravaganza and the 3DO conversion features none of the re-working applied to the recent Macintosh adaptation...

tation won some rave reviews, but a few doubting Thomases argued the Emperor was, if not naked, at least rather thinly attired. Beneath the stylish graphics, the gameplay suffered from the limited interaction and repetitiveness of any FMV-type game. Because it's all prerendered, it's always the same pattern and success comes down to simply memorising what happens next. Also, while the graphics were impressive for a PC they were still far from perfect with plenty of blotchy, blocky artefacts.

On the 3DO system you might expect far more impressive visuals, but you'd be disappointed. Unlike the enhanced Mac version, the 3DO version appears rushed and fully retains all the blotchy imperfections. The movie cut-sequences are well integrated and impressively lengthy, but the quality is variable and often quite poor – especially in comparison with Virgin's *Demolition Man*. The dubious FMV might be a nagging flaw with another game-type, but with *Rebel Assault*, FMV is the game and the in-game visuals are just as problematic as the presentation stuff. Some sections, such as the computer generated stormtrooper assault and most space combat scenes are just about perfect visually. The Death Star attack, with perfectly defined TIE Fighters and X-Wings floating about the screen is highly impressive. More

The AT-AT attack, left, features some initially impressive, spooled sequences. Sadly, the graphics break up quite badly.



Much of the success of *Rebel Assault* on PC can be attributed to the brilliant atmosphere created by the endless cut-away sections, some lifted from the movie and others created specifically. However, these seem shaky on 3DO now, when compared to the stunning (and more original) *JumpGate*. And like all FMV sequences, they soon get tedious.

often, however, the visuals swarm with encoding artefacts. Dramatic missions through twisting valleys, caverns and riverbeds are reasonably fun to play, but the scenery is blocky and unimpressive. The various overhead shoot-'em-up sections, a neat idea for adding some variety, are seen through a hazy filter of poorly encoded graphics. Even the various static pictures, such as fellow pilots' faces, are often quite grainy with a typically PC lack of colours – a 3DO system could, of course, manage photorealistic visuals.

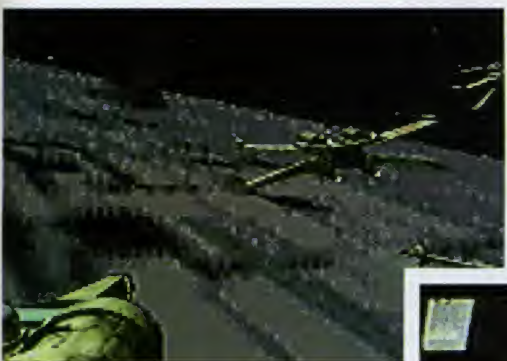
Overall, *Rebel Assault* is a real disappointment then. As always with these type of FMV-spectaculars, gameplay is simplistic and ultimately very repetitive. Poor encoding means the graphics, which should compensate for gameplay limitations, simply don't. Ironically, it's Star Wars fans themselves rather than casual gamers who'll be most saddened by *Rebel Assault*, the complete waste of this licence being difficult to bear. If LucasArts can't do a decent Star Wars game, who can? This was obsolete before it even arrived on 3DO, and is a sad debut for such a big developer. Hopefully, next time they'll go for gameplay rather than a big name and easy conversion work. □ ssw

3DO Magazine rating: ★★





The opening training mission for *Rebel Assault* isn't that inspiring, a simple left and right 'avoid the spooled landscape' affair, which is saved only by decent cut-away scenes (below).



The attack on the Death Star, left and above, features some of the best action on offer, with a combination of brilliantly effective use of the Star Wars movie, and some decent 3D blasting games at last.



Below, a rather tepid, chase the Probot section. Again, rather poor quality spooled backgrounds.



This 3D assault on the planet surface is like *Shock Wave*, except it's no good. A forced altitude means you never get close to those scout walkers, diminishing the fun somewhat. One of the easiest levels.



3D Atlas

Publisher: Electronic Arts © 0753 549442 Developer: Multimedia Corporation Save Game: No Price: £TBA Available: TBA

A curious release on first sight, this is multimedia at its very best, taking a potentially devastatingly boring subject (geography) and using the power of a console to inject a mega-tonne of excitement and, most importantly, interaction. The cover line, "The world isn't flat. Why should your atlas be?", is a clear indication of the program's most obvious attraction – no pages to flip and no magnifying lens required, just zoom into and rotate the planet freely – but it's also rather disingenuous because there's a lot more than place names in here.

After selecting just what you want to be visible on your globe, the most obvious decision is to zoom in. This is possible with nine different types of zoom, culminating in satellite images of cities and terrain that are quite overwhelming. Another immediately stunning option is to watch 3D fly-by's of the Alps, Himalayas, Rockies and Sheep Mountains, which are fast and impressive. Also available, although more of interest to geologists than casual explorers, are topographic illustrations of any given location, which can be rotated and zoomed into, or viewed on time-lapse to show predictions of environmental change.

Click on any country, and an information-filled postcard will appear that can be rotated to read a brief social and geographical report on the selected place, but the real tour de force of *3D Atlas* lie in the video documentaries that can be pulled up on each city, each detailing significant aspects of politics, environmental dangers, population, animal life and more. These are of a very high standard, both technically and editorially, with concise, simply worded appraisals and literally thousands of interesting facts.

Although this wealth of information could be overwhelming, EA have cleverly inserted a quiz game which allows up to four people to implement their new found knowledge of the globe. *Around The World* picks a starting point then asks you questions ranging from pop-

Billed as a Multimedia expedition to understanding planet earth, this is EA's brave stab at providing some edutainment for the more responsible 3DO owner with family ties...

ulation to geography and environment, correct answers winning you air miles, the ultimate objective being to circumnavigate yourself back to your original location. These multiple choice questions are never dull, and basic flag identification and country of origin tests are wisely spread between more unusual queries – such as how many nuclear bombs have been exploded since WWII. The quiz is very entertaining, with occasional bursts of FMV to spice things up, but the second challenge is selecting from a choice of three locations, the destination you want to travel to with your air miles. The shortest, straightest route is the key to winning, but you might be surprised at how slim your geographic knowledge is when you end up flying all over the place, endlessly picking the least useful next location. This is great fun, especially with a few people jostling around the 3DO, shouting complete guesses, and as an aid to learning, it's probably the most immediately useful section of this package.

Whilst gamers blissfully free of hatchlings will blithely avoid this package, unfortunates in possession of children have an obligation to purchase *3D Atlas*, since it's a quite excellent learning tool that few early and pre-teens will be able to resist. The chief inadequacy of standard schooling – lack of interaction, transference of facts made un-interesting through the tedious process of communication and inability to impart a sense of reality and relevance – have been dissolved here, the program skill-

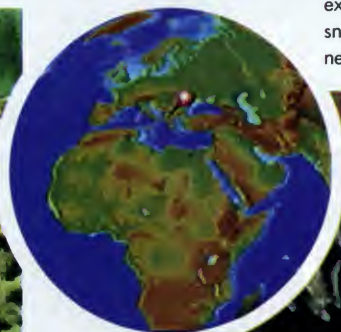


The picture quality in the excellently compiled documentaries is of a very high standard, with clean cuts and fast accessing times. The mini-films can also be freeze-framed to study particularly interesting stills.

fully implementing all the features associated with the very best multimedia learning aids. Whilst you could lead a child through *3D Atlas* with structured, logical progression, the tremendous user interface allows for intuitive, exciting lateral steps, one area of investigation easily flowing to another, cross referencing made incredibly easy since at any time you can pull out, spin the globe, and go somewhere else entirely, the important ingredient of choice being a powerful aid to retention of information. Perhaps the most profound effect of exploring earth via *3D Atlas* is that although you see snapshots of cultures and environmental situations you'd never seen before, the overall impression is of a place



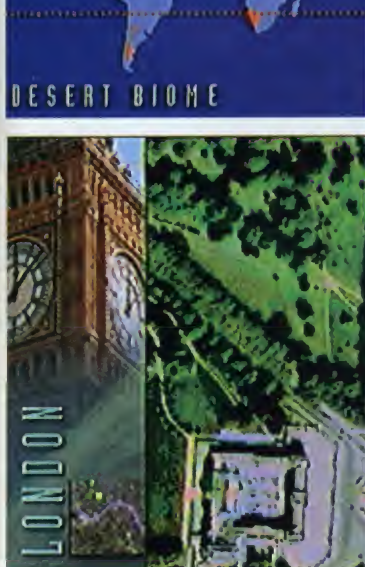
In 1989, developing countries paid more than \$133 billion to creditors in developed countries.



Left, there's a lot of money talk in 3D Atlas, to let you know just who owes who. Another deeply depressing fact, right

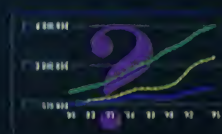


One third of all species on Earth could disappear by the year 2020.



It's horrible facts like this one (above) that makes *3D Atlas* a bizarre combination of fun and misery. Most are pieces of information you've heard before, but the mix of imagery and caption brings everything home. The FMV sequences that appear in the quiz game enhance the appearance considerably, making winning fun.

Which country's land area is greater than that of the other two countries combined?



► New Zealand
Namibia
Gabon

smaller and more integrated than you'd ever imagined. This sense of unity is an important achievement – with the chief emphasis of *3D Atlas* wisely focusing upon environmental damage, a lot of facts and figures about the ozone layer and wildlife destruction combine to provide a relevance that cannot be achieved by mere shouting. *3D Atlas* quietly reminds you of both the world's smallness and painful fragility, and this is perhaps even

more commendable than its excellent geographic tutoring. An excellent juncture for specialist 3DO software to develop from, this is a powerful and commendable multimedia package that deserves serious attention, and provides a standard that all future multimedia products should aspire to. □ mcw

3DO Magazine rating: ★★★★★



The *Around The World* quiz is fun but very difficult (for me at least). Better than learning at school.



Operation JumpGate

Publisher: Electronic Arts © 0753 549442 **Developer:** ATG **Save Game:** 5 SRAM Slots **Price:** £29.99 **Available:** Now

First things first. The superlative intro from *Shock Wave* has, remarkably, been surpassed for *Operation JumpGate*, which features a mini-movie of epic proportions to whet the appetite. This trailer looks better than any recent sci-fi movie, with extraordinary War Of The Worlds inspired vignettes of death and destruction that simply astonish, both in their variety and vision.

In-game, everything looks familiar at first, with the cockpit sheath of your F177 fighter folding back to reveal smooth scrolling, barren landscapes, but the strange panoramas you skim above now are of the alien planet rather than earth – the new war against the aliens has shifted to an offensive attack. The delightful female flight controller is at hand again, passing information and tactical plans via a small VDU on your control panel, and these info bursts are significantly enhanced over *Shock Wave*, with more detailed analysis and impressive computer visuals.

More assistance is required however, as these new missions are significantly more sophisticated than their predecessors. Whereas *Shock Wave* required little thought, offering only a collection of barren landscapes to blitz, *JumpGate* inserts a variety of mini missions into each, large section, so there's a variety of situations to absorb and tackle, from destroying energy fields to allow bombing sorties, to avoiding alien ships employing radar jamming devices and flash flares to blind you. And it's not just the missions that have become more sophisticated. Enemy spacecraft and ground artillery have been revolutionised in the seven year hiatus – they are ferocious, both in firepower and manoeuvrability. The new fighter planes, all gorgeously texture mapped and animated, are lovingly designed, from conventional, Star

The sublime presentation of *Shock Wave* couldn't disguise the rather lacklustre gameplay within, the repetitive shoot-'em-up action soon wearing thin. But in a bold marketing move, EA have released five new missions that re-commence the adventure seven years after the original alien invasion of earth...

Wars inspired snub fighters to ethereal, darting, bat-shaped planes that hover on their side, almost impossible to hit, before spinning around and screaming into your cockpit window. Ground installations which previously crouched, waiting for destruction, now boast laser turrets and heavy defences, and as well as walkers and homing mines, small, impossibly fast strike planes defend in formation over sensitive alien installations. The enemy attack routines also seem more intelligent; assaults are less kamikaze-like as fighters circle, chase and bomb, making continual forward acceleration essential for survival. Your homing missiles vanish in a blink, as you attempt to escape from hostile territory in search of a welcoming refuel craft, which hover for several minutes in safe zones before vanishing. The option to just blast through the terrain avoiding

air traffic is closed for your ship, however, as surviving enemies regroup at later points in the mission to attack again. Later levels soon boast a sky full of enemy hardware and explosions, leaving you literally dazzled by the intensity of the action.

Whilst actual play in *JumpGate* is significantly improved over *Shock Wave* then, the flaw that ran through the original is still present: missions are even longer here, each having five or six mini sections, but each time



The icy caverns and valleys of level two, above, hide an army of enemy aircraft and ground artillery. Fast, precise shooting is required to progress further into this tough blaster.

you die, you're thrown back to the very start. Since just mission one takes twenty minutes to complete, inevitably there's a lot of time spent replaying earlier sections, which is very frustrating. It's a lazy way to extend the game's life, and considering that you must buy the original *Shock Wave* to play these five (admittedly long) missions, *JumpGate*'s value for money could be called into question.

That said, fans of the original will need no persuading to buy this much improved update. If you relished the brilliant sci-fi theme, brilliantly realised to provide a fantastic atmosphere in *ShockWave*, *Operation JumpGate* will be a welcome chance to continue the adventure, with seriously improved gameplay and even better graphics. ☐ mcw

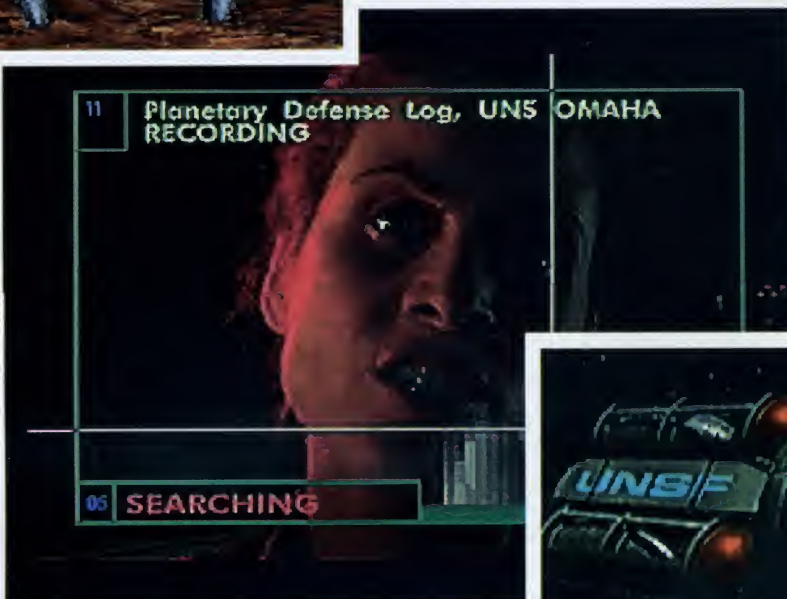
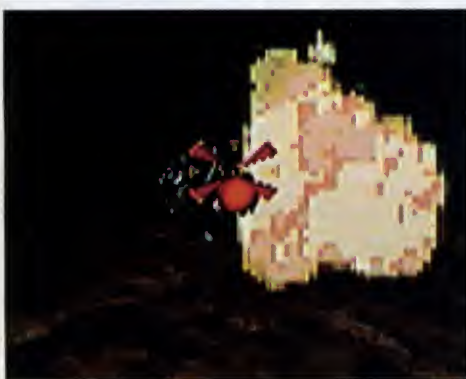
3DO Magazine rating: ★★



The texture mapped design of the alien craft (left) is superb. Each has a distinctive flight pattern, can shake off your target locking system with ease and hit fast and hard. *JumpGate* is serious arcade action.



Captured left, is that rare moment when your cursor flashes to tell you a target is locked. Clipping with your lasers is tough, but guided missiles are extravagant and must be saved for tougher craft.



The War Of The Worlds style intro (above) is packed with tremendous pieces of art, that reach out and pull you into this visually stunning game. Also impressive are the brilliantly designed new enemy craft, insets left and above, all lightning fast.

Above, your attack coordinator, who adds a dash of glamour to this 50's B-movie extravaganza. Oh, the joy of being reprimanded by her enticing tones.



StarBlade

Publisher: Panasonic © 0344 853146 Developer: Namco Save Game: 3 Continues Price: £TBA Available: Now

Apart from the shattered glass title screen, there's nothing in *StarBlade* to betray the fact that it's just a game. The intro is a classic piece of tight, minimalistic realism with a couple of tactical displays outlining the threat posed by Red-Eye, a mechanical planet menacing an innocent world. As arrows arc across the screen, supplementary information flashes up in the borders while a clipped, military voice outlines the plan. In the game itself voices are blurred with static as a group leader passes on invaluable tactical advice, while co-pilots keep you updated on their progress. Your own lasers are fairly quiet and, since you're firing them so much, that's a good thing, but then how do you explain the 'shuhh-shuhh' sound that sporadically erupts out of the mix? This bizarre, alien effect is superbly unsettling. Overall, the soundtrack wraps the entire game in an utterly convincing atmosphere, anchoring the often bizarre graphics into an adrenaline-pumping sense of militaristic realism.

StarBlade's original graphics are the most innovative and intriguing 3D shapes that have ever been crammed into a single game. The Anglo-Japanese *Starwing* is one, long homage to *StarBlade*, recreating entire chunks of the game in their entirety while using its style to inspire the rest. The shapes look real, they're like nothing you've seen before but somehow the scale, their sound as they pass you and, crucially, the way they move, make it a truly convincing experience. The news that the 3DO *StarBlade* would feature enhanced, texture-mapped graphics could have caused a storm of controversy – a nose job on a videogame Mona Lisa. The fact that the original version's graphics are retained, as an option, shows how respected they are... but now they're obsolete. 3DO *StarBlade* features some of the most aesthetically-polished texture maps yet seen. The game's first scene is the most impressive ever in a

There are few games so genuinely influential, so unquestionably epic and, ultimately, so beautiful as Namco's 1991 coin-op smash: *StarBlade*.

videogame. The launch tunnel drops away, your ship tilts and the sky's flickering is revealed as the dazzle from the mirrored face of a minutely detailed starship, effortlessly cutting through the flames burning off the hulk of a doomed battleship. Again and again, the game awes you not only with the imagination and detail of its visuals, but also the presentation. The way the game poses itself, moving you around and around, with snap turns and vertigo-inducing rolls, gives it the look and feel of a movie shot by an Oscar-winning cinematographer – on 18 different kinds of speed.

Pretty looks aren't everything of course, and the fact remains that *StarBlade* is locked on rails like any other FMV game. The route, the attacks, the tactics – they're always the same and the arcade version's limited ability to move the screen about is lost. Yet while most FMV games soon become tedious through their repetitiveness, I found *StarBlade* different. Aside from its sheer beauty, there's the ferocity of its attack. Even *StarBlade* veterans find the new version tough, energy is soon lost and, unlike *Rebel Assault*, there are no passwords, just three continues making every tiny fraction of energy vital if you're going to see it through to the end. Also, for this type of game, *StarBlade* is relatively thoughtful, because there are so many targets filling every frame of the game. It's not about simply blasting everything – no-one could blast every alien in *StarBlade* – instead victory goes to the person who can prioritise. You must constantly evaluate, from



The original *StarBlade* was a classic of its time, but few people would prefer the original polygons, right, to the new, texture mapped version, above. This scene is right at the start of the game and is a real jaw-dropper with the mirrored ship's front literally dazzling the player.

second to second, which threat to your survival is the most critical. Should you hit the torpedo about to fill your screen, or take the hit so you can blast the battleship that is about to launch a salvo of three more? The tactical element adds immeasurably to the game's addictivity. Whereas in *Rebel* survival is basically a question of memorising enemy attacks, with *StarBlade* you're constantly wondering about your tactics – which targets should you hit first in order to best preserve your precious shield.

Despite its difficulty, *StarBlade* is rather small for its pricepoint. It won't take you very long to get to the end and after that the game simply wraps around – albeit with an immense challenge before you do get right to the very end. Nevertheless, as a piece of arcade history *StarBlade* is difficult to resist. Particularly ironic is the fact that while *Rebel Assault* is far newer, bigger and more ambitious, it's *StarBlade* which looks the more advanced. Partially this is because the encoding is so much sharper. *Rebel* often looks quite blotchy and lacking in colour, while *StarBlade* is beautifully colourful and razor-sharp throughout – on my 23-inch TV at least. Also, it's so much faster, more dramatic and, yes, unspeakably ferocious. If you think you're up to its challenge, check it out. □ ssw

3DO Magazine rating: ★★★★★



The spaceyard is one of the most lethal sections of the game. Laser bolts come from every direction, hammering your ship like a hailstorm. Only the quick will survive.

Your ship zooms up, turns, then dives down into an alien city as missiles swarm upwards, left. In the arcades, *StarBlade*'s success led to *Galaxian 3*, currently the centrepiece of Namco's Japanese arcadia with a huge room on hydraulics to simulate its acrobatic turns.



Too late! An enemy missile fills your screen, left, seconds before impact. Below, Red Eye, the artificial moon trying to destroy your own world.



Above, an apocalyptic scene from the first battle. Below, screens from the launch and briefing sequences – stylistic masterpieces.



Jammit

Publisher: TBA © N/A **Developer:** GTE Interactive **Save Game:** Passwords **Price:** £TBA **Available:** TBA

Setting a game in a ghetto may be acceptable for a crime-fighting blaster or beat-'em-up, where the hero is liberating or fleeing his economically deprived surroundings, but playing a character who actually lives in a (politically incorrect) dump is downright perverse. Did the market research guys figure that kids feel a hip affinity with young, broke, street basketball wasters? Are all future videogame alter-egos to be resiliently apathetic slackers? You're so hard-up, apparently, that you can't even afford the dubious luxury of sporting friends, so a full team game is out of the question, and instead you cavort and lob with just one, makeshift basketball net in one of three, desperately derelict settings, atmospherically decorated with burning oil drums and graffiti-sprayed brick walls. These graphics are not of the standard we've come to expect of the 3DO, and betray the 8-bit origins of the game, as do the rather simply animated three main characters. They're certainly not badly done, but with such a simple scenario, they really need to be extra special in way of compensation. However, they are characterful, and the bleach blonde, tightly clad Roxy proved to be an enormously popular character choice. A wider range of basketball players would have been appreciated though, as experimentation between just three is fairly short lived.

The action in *Jammit* is extraordinarily simple; each character can run, leap, attack (foul) and dribble the ball, the most common aim being to reach twenty-one points before your opponent, although ten point sudden death scenarios appear later on. The further away from the net you score, the more points you get, and pushing or shoving reward your opponent with three penalty shots. The screen scrolls (not too smoothly) across about one and a half screens worth of tarmac, giving you free reign to dodge the irksome hoodlum pursuing you, but whilst this outrageously simplistic premise appears moronic to begin with, things soon appear to be better than the outline would suggest.

Before each match, you can gamble as much money as you've got on

The two-on-one final battle is the toughest scrap, with fouls galore.

This ancient MegaDrive game doesn't seem a likely source of inspiration for 3DO conversion, its previous incarnation being generally ill-received due to the abundance of excellent full team basketball games available. But since *Jammit* is the first 3DO dabble at 'netball for men', the slate is clean to assess this thoroughly peculiar title.

the match outcome, and after you've cleaned out your opponent (the bigger your bet, the fewer sessions required to empty his pocket) you're moved on to a new game style. These are progressively more entertaining variations of one-on-one basketball – all shots must be made from moving X's, certain scores must be leap-frogged to avoid point deductions, shots must be clean or they're ignored – culminating in a two-against-one climax that is both great reward and good fun. The game is packed with streetwise samples as the street gang 'dis' and mock each other, and a noisy beatbox blasts out hip hop riffs that all add to the atmosphere.

The only graphical fair *Jammit* can boast of (apart from the delicious Roxy), is the close-up cut-ins that appear when you actually leap for the basket, showing the players in more detail to assist blocks and shots. Although these aren't exactly state-of-the-art (the players float rather too much and are minimally animated), they do add some visual panache conspicuously lacking from the rest of the game. They also eliminate arguments as to who actually scored or blocked successfully.

In one-player mode, these variations must be played in order (with a handy password saving your progress), but in two-player, any gamestyle and any of the three scummy locations can be chosen, and there's no doubt that the game comes into its own with two players pushing and jostling against each other. Despite, or rather because of the immense simplicity of play, the action is fiercely addictive and maddeningly competitive. There's a



The sublime Roxy scores again (sadly, not with me) against the rather ominous backdrop. Sad, isn't it?

wide range of tactics to develop for each style of game, the stark objectives belying a fairly sophisticated core playability. Despite a sense of regret at the retrograde graphics, this visual drabness fails to completely sabotage *Jammit*, as do the numerous flaws, such as slow-down, poor scrolling, lack of animation frames and difficult to judge 3D. With presentation on par with an EA sports title this could have been a minor classic, but there's no doubt that if you're taken with the scenario, you'll get a lot of pleasure from this quirky release. However, this doesn't provide much in the way of competition against a full team basketball game, and with the 3DO widely recognised as having the very best sports simulations around, a premiere league slam-dunkin' smash would appear to be long overdue. □ mcw

3DO Magazine rating: ★★★



3DO Magic

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Station Invasion

Publisher: 3DO © TBA Developer: Studio 3DO Save Game: No Price: TBA Available: TBA

Quiz shows seem popular fair for 3DO systems in America, but *Station Invasion*, though aimed at the pre-teen audience, is the first package to feature the professional polish and simple playability of the genre's classic, EA's *Twisted*, unsurprising since Studio 3DO developed that title as well. Using similar live action footage pasted onto computer generated backdrops and utterly simplistic yet fairly compelling quizzes, *Station Invasion* accurately re-creates the ultra-bright, candy coated environment that permeates every crap American gameshow and soap you've ever seen.

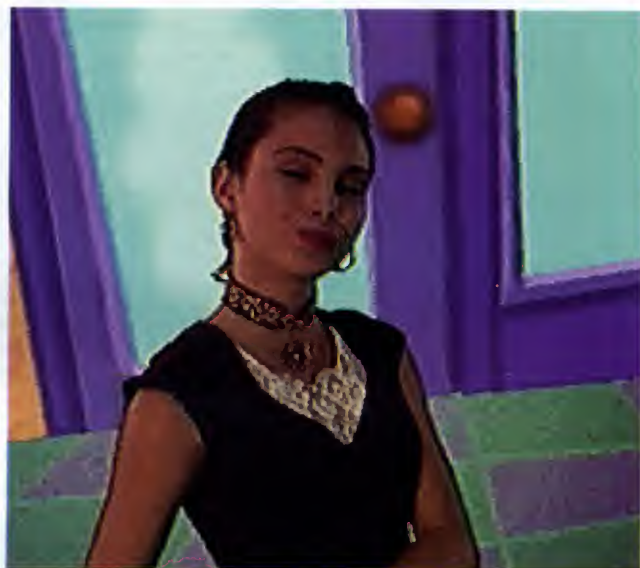
The setting of a TV studio is a good premise to build upon and the story makes good use of the material – an average TV production house has been invaded by kids, who are not only starring in, but actually running the shows. There are five programmes battling it out in the network ratings ("it's all about gutz, brainz and ratings, kid"), all vehicles for abominable young brats, such as Ernie Go-Lucky, host of What's That Smell, and Angelica D'Jour, glam and fab, teen star of *Sundaes Of Our Lives*. You pick which show you want to produce, and can compete for ratings against up to four other people. Your child prodigy gives each of you a mundane task or puzzle to solve, and the winner gets points which equal ratings figures. As another reward (?) the winning producer gets to screen the next, sixty second segment of their winning program, before moving on to round two. The whole audio and visual assault is linked by a pre-pubescent female news reporter and her dog, who pass irritating comments from the comfort of their sofa studio.

The min-programmes are well produced (for a videogame), and although the wit and cynicism of *Twisted* isn't visible, there's still an element of parody that adds humour to the predicably stupid, over-the-top clips. What's That Smell is pretty banal, but *Sundaes Of*

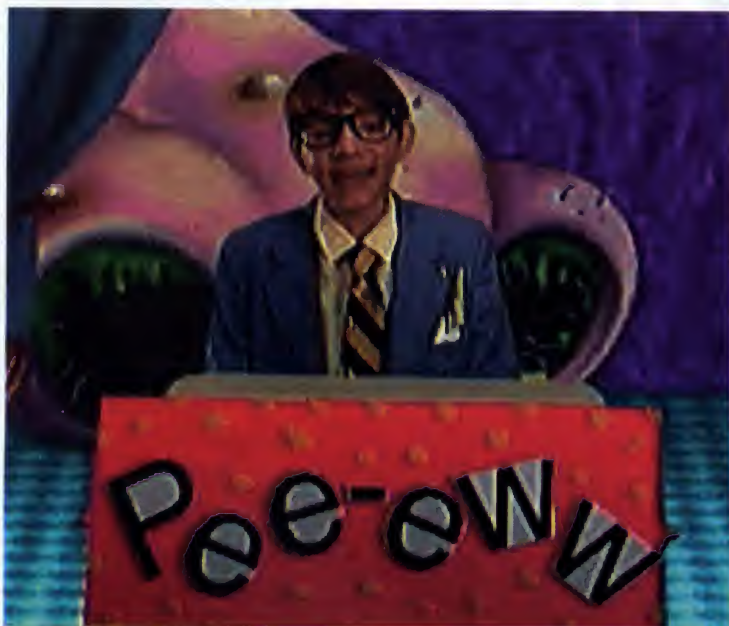
This edutainment game gives you and your youngest the chance to work for a "Powerhouse (TV station) producing some top draw entertainment..." Heady heights indeed, unless your children are as precocious as the kidz in this game.

Our Lives is a genuinely amusing spin on Alice and Blossom, with Angelica victimising her podgy friend and flirting with a milkshake boy to amusing effect. The graphic design of these star vehicles is consistently impressive, which is fair compromise considering their shortness, and as an incentive to beat your chums and grab that air time, they work very well.

The puzzle games that make up the bulk of this package are well presented (though simply styled, they're well themed) and blissfully free of too many specifically American questions (that so plagued *Family Feud*). Instead, there's simple maths questions, spelling teasers, sliding puzzle games (complete a picture of a classical composer whilst his most famous tune plays in the background, and you're rewarded by a brief biography), identify the object and pick the musical instrument that's playing. This is one of the more innovative subgames, using the console's capacity for audio and visual questions rather more effectively than the others, and it's a shame more games exploiting the 3DO's capabilities couldn't have been implemented. Perhaps the most enjoyable game though, is the Script Rewrite section, where you must pick from a small selection of random



Angelica D'Jour, permanently pouting star (and she knows it) of *Sundaes Of Our Lives*, a low budget soap that revolves entirely around her empty, gossip dominated life.



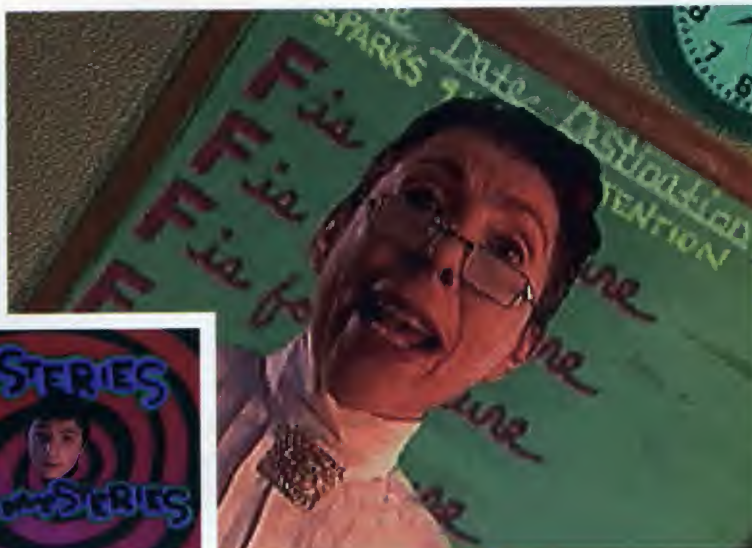
verbs, nouns and adjectives, words that will be then inserted into an unread script (a telling indication of how these shows are written?). The re-reading of the mystery script is hilarious, as well as having the obvious benefits of explaining the difference between action, name and descriptive words. Great fun. There's not many of these games, so they soon start repeating themselves, but they're

All the kids in this game are quite completely horrible, but this bespectacled nerd is the most unpleasant and has the most annoying, How Do They Do That style game show. Quite infuriating.

all enjoyable enough and obviously, the point is that they skilfully disguise the mathematical, geographical and historical questions with cute graphics and over excited sound FX. The three difficulty levels are also well judged, with easy being fairly moronic (sorry – good for youngsters) whilst hard had me stumped.

Whilst it's easy to dismiss all this day-glo activity as crass and simplistic initially, there's actually a fair level of sophistication to the game. The way the various segments of show, quiz, report, ratings update etc. are all invisibly linked, lacking any pregnant pauses common to less well designed video game shows, is a testament to some well-worked design, with youngsters never given a chance to get bored. As a piece of edutainment software, this is highly commendable, and whilst British kids may blanch at the sickly, gooey atmosphere ever present, those with a more developed cynicism should enjoy laughing at the vile gameshow stars and their enormous, transparent egos. This treads a narrow path between education and good fun very successfully, and offers a clear outline for future edutainment packages to follow. A more British variant, with a bit more doom, gloom, rain and cynicism would go down a treat though, preferably programmed in Manchester. Fornow, however, Studio 3DO seem to have cornered the market in gameshows, with two fabulous releases. □ mcw

3DO Magazine rating: ★★



A hand holds a black clapperboard with white and yellow text. The clapperboard has a black and white striped top bar. The text on the clapperboard reads: "title: Sundae", "scene 1", "take: 39", "What is the name of this geometric figure?", a white square box, "Square", "Cone", "Pentagon", "Triangle", "Cube", and "Circle". The clapperboard is positioned in front of a colorful, abstract background. A small inset image in the bottom right corner shows a newspaper clipping with the text "B.S.P." and a portrait of a man.



Snare Drum

Maracas

28

Tuba

Trumpet

Bass

Harp



The Incredible Machine

Publisher: Sierra © 0734 303322 Developer: Dynamix Save Game: Automatic Save Price: £39.99 Available: Now

Sierra's sage decision to release Dynamix's *Incredible Machine* means that the 3DO system can now boast one of, if not the, best puzzle games ever to have made it onto a computer or console format. Different to any other game released (except, of course, the sequel, *Sid And Al's Incredible Toons*) it offers two modes of play – either the player has to solve individual 'puzzles' or build his or her own sprawling 'machine'. That might immediately put the technophobe off – but wait until you see the kind of thing Dynamix have in mind.

In the Puzzle Mode, at the start of each new game, you'll be told your somewhat bizarre-sounding goal. That might be: 'Make the Monkey move' or 'Make all of the dynamite go off'. Confused? Well, you see, each new screen will be composed of several atomistic parts, connected in some way or other. You might have a 'Pokey The Cat', a 'Mort The Mouse', a 'Dynamite Plunger', a 'See-Saw' and a 'Pinball Bumper' (there are 70 different 'machine parts' in all) and be told to make Mort The Mouse get in his hole. Success relies on the player knowing the specific relationship between each of these elements (that Pokey The Cat makes Mort The Mouse run; that light shining onto a Magnifier will light a Fuse, etc.) and have a mind dextrous enough to be

Dynamix's *The Incredible Machine* hit the PC a year ago and ruptured many a mind. A deeply peculiar, unhealthily addictive, brain-bending puzzle game, it gets 3DO Magazine's vote as the most original title of the month – quite an achievement when you look at some of the more obscure Japanese releases that are around.

able to work out how to use those elements and relationships to make a machine capable of achieving the goal that's been given. Dynamix have included 208 mind-teasers for you to 'enjoy'. Naturally the first is ridiculously easy, the last nigh on impossible.

Given that the game requires a fair degree of (learned) knowledge, Dynamix have also included 30 Training Missions, allowing the player to get used to the various machine parts. Persevere with these and you'll soon have acquired all of the knowledge that you'll need to complete puzzle 208. However, knowledge and the ability required to put everything together are two quite different things. If you're anything like me you'll have to stare at a particular puzzle for ages before you'll be able to solve it. The weird thing is once you can solve it you'll flap your arms and wonder what all of the



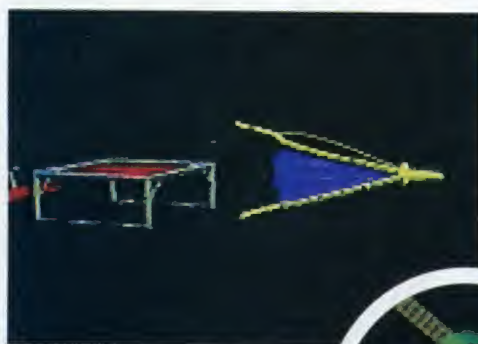
Above, a Silicon Graphic representation of a typical chain reaction.

fuss was about.

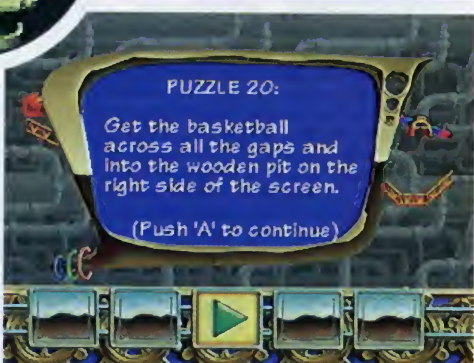
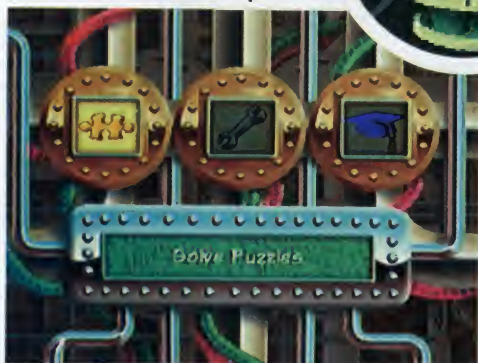
The Incredible Machine's Machine Mode effectively gives the game an everlasting lifespan, allowing the player to create tortuously complicated machines of his or her own, using the various relationships between the 70 mechanical parts to near-interminable effect. Imagine you've just discovered the ability to line up hundreds of dominoes and push one to set off a chain reaction. That's the kind of effect that you get here – but stupendously more varied. By pushing one thing you can get little men to fall off platforms and onto see-saws that will push a basketball into the air and onto a dynamite plunger – and so on. Most of the fun here is derived from watching these reactions, the fruits of your pained labour.

Obviously *The Incredible Machine* won't appeal to everyone – the arcade-fanatic will merely scratch his head before rummaging around his/her game collection for a more immediate and frenetic blaster. Yet there will be many for whom *The Incredible Machine* will become a dangerous obsession, who will not be able to sleep until they've solved that one, annoying puzzle they've been working on all day (and if they're truly addicted, all night). I fell into the latter category and now could not do without this wondrous game. There is, simply, a ghost in my machine without it. □ dw

3DO Magazine rating: ★★★★★



Below, at the start of the game you'll be offered three modes of play: Solve Puzzles, Build A Machine or Tutorial Mode. Puzzles in Tutorial Mode and Puzzle Mode combined add up to 238!





Return Fire has come from nowhere and looks set to go down as one of, if not *the*, best two-player game on the 3DO system. Dazzling 3-D technology, stunning pre-generated landscapes, four awesomely powerful attack-vehicles and a challenge bigger than any faced by Schwarzenegger make this a brilliant start to the year for the 3DO. Create your very own Lebanon in miniature – get Silent Software's exasperatingly addictive *Return Fire*. You wouldn't believe how much fun war could be.

Return Fire

Publisher: The 3DO Company © TBA **Developer:** Silent Software **Save Game:** SRAM Slots **Price:** £TBA **Available:** TBA

Like all the best games, *Return Fire* revolves around a beautifully simple premise – annihilate your opponent. Like all of the best games again, lurking beneath this simple surface are engagingly complex intricacies that beg to be explored and mastered. A potent concoction of *Syndicate* and *Cannon Fodder*, *Return Fire* brilliantly implements an isometric/top-down view of the action with miniaturised dogs of war as its players. 32-bit technology allows a revolutionary break from the static perspective and non-scrolling limitations of a fixed landscape, the 3DO providing a real-time generated backdrop with atmospheric zooms into the action, fast scrolling, detailed landscapes and realistic use of urban terrain. Static screenshots may not look much – but wait until you see the game's lightning moves, and impressive, true 3D virtual display.

Every game pits the green forces against the brown, irrespective of whether you're playing a one or a two-player game. Each side must send out a chosen vehicle (tank, APV, jeep or chopper) to journey through the enemy battlements to find the opponent's flag tower. The flag must then be returned (only the jeep can be used to actually recover it) to the Allied base to secure victory. Naturally though, it isn't that easy. Enemy battlements are huge, with Kafkaesque corridors of roads linking one encampment full of missile-firing turrets and gun-toting helicopters to another. The flag tower is often found right at the centre of enemy forces, accessible only after mad, deathly battle. Mines are everywhere you don't expect them to be, destroying your tank/whatever in one mighty explosion. Your opponent, moreover, may well have decided to abandon his search for your flag and just be gunning for you – chasing you down long, stretching roads in his mother of a helicopter.

Vehicle selection is the most important immediate concern at the beginning of each game, but this is fairly simple at first. It's best to use the helicopter, initially, to recon the area, discover where the enemy flag tower is so that you can determine the fastest, most efficient route to get there. Unfortunately, the helicopters aren't the most effective vehicles to use against enemy battlements so, once you've worked out your way-points, it's best to fly back to your base and replace your craft with a tank or APV and wipe out a path to the flag. The APV is

particularly effective at destroying airborne enemies, but both are excellent at punching a hole through the enemy's line, leaving the way fairly clear for your weak, poorly armed jeep to nip thorough to the flag and back.

The first one-player mission lets you get used to the way the game works. There are no enemy battlements, no enemy craft – just the flag tower. Silent Software have ensured that the learning curve given to the player is such that you're never confused, but always up against a challenge. Just as you think you've mastered the game's intricacies, another 'trick' is learnt, momentarily giving you an advantage over your opponent – until he/she discovers something you don't know and the game starts to swing in the other direction. At first, just shooting down an enemy helicopter with your tank is incredibly difficult, chances are it'll destroy you pretty



The extraordinary zooming and scrolling of *Return Fire* is best demonstrated when your new vehicle rolls out of storage. The camera zooms in close as your tank rolls onto the tarmac, before smoothly pulling back to give a wide view of any enemies. This looks like no game ever seen on a console.

quickly. But when you've stopped flailing wildly, and master the separately controlled turret, it begins to get a little easier. Eventually, with just a little bit of luck, you'll be shooting the things down left, right and centre.

While the game's design is undoubtedly exceedingly good it's the graphics that go a long way to explain *Return Fire*'s success. The 3D is perfect, the miniature craft and building are architectural marvels. The authenticity of the spiralling landscape means that the terrain is usable – you can actually shelter behind buildings and creep up on opposing forces. Some of the buildings are also 'interactive' – the player can re-fuel at oil installations, or pick up ammo at enemy bases. Moreover, everything is up for being destroyed – most cities look like Beirut at the worst of its troubles, rubble and burning buildings lying prostrate beneath your feet. It's great fun levelling an enemy city in this way, especially in two-

player mode, your devastating effect mirrored on your opponents crumpled face as you destroy his buildings, run over his (populated) tents and waste his forces. There can be no doubt that two player games are a key to a platform's success and the 3DO is fast gaining a valuable collection of them. As well as *SSF2X*, *John Madden*, *FIFA Soccer* and *Off The Road Interceptor*, thanks to Silent Software, the 3DO company can now include another one. And if *Return Fire* doesn't sell a hundred thousand pieces of hardware, the world will have proved itself



Left, a plane's been downed above your APV. Below, a chopper is ready to launch. It's the most difficult craft to control, but the fastest and good for checking out where trouble is likely to occur early on.





Destroying helicopters and jets is enjoyably satisfying (above). Instead of just disintegrating, their charred remains fall dramatically to the ground (or sea). Dead as can be.



Above, the brown tank and green APV merrily scoot around each others territory, blasting with gusto, blissfully ignorant of each other. If you spot your opponent collecting his flag, though, it's time to seek and destroy at great speed.

an unfair place to be.

It's the graphic details within *Return Fire* that make the game such a joy. You'll get a real kick when you destroy your first building and watch its tiny inhabitants running for cover. With your tank you can then run them over and hear the sickest of squishy noises. And don't think this is mindless violence. Fail to run them over and they'll start lobbing grenades at you or taking pot shots from unreachable corners. A gorgeous touch is being able turn the jeep into an amphibious craft - it's vital, in fact, when you need to get to a remote island but the bridge, connecting it to the mainland, has been destroyed by the enemy.

Return Fire may seem like Sensible Software's much vaunted *Cannon Fodder*, and it is - but it's got so much

more to it that you cannot fail to be blown away. Imagine *Cannon Fodder* with an instantly addictive, all-action, simultaneous two-player mode, state-of-the-art graphics, a true 3-D terrain, four types of perfectly modelled vehicles of destruction and a game engine requiring sophisticated strategy and planning. Only then can you possibly begin to appreciate just what an advance this game is, and what a wise investment you made when you bought the most advanced console in the world, the 3DO - the only platform that could possibly have delivered such an extraordinary, and completely essential, title. Make sure that you reserve your very own copy today. □ dw

3DO Magazine rating: ★★★★★



Your selection of hardcore military hardware sits snugly beneath ground, each offering unique advantages to be weighed up before selection.

Virtuoso

Publisher: Elite © 0922 55852 Developer: Elite Save Game: Level Save Price: £44.99 Available: Now



On the PC, networked *Doom* reigns supreme. Business men have calculated that the loss of profits generated from the decreased efficiency of their work force runs into millions. Indeed, even within usually jaded software houses it's a 'banned' game – no one is allowed to play it until after working hours.

It should be no surprise then to find a whole host of companies trying to cash in on iD's success – to provide stop-gap games until the release of LucasArts' *Dark Forces* and/or iD's very own SVGA *Quake*. *Virtuoso* fits very neatly into this category. A 'me too' game, there's very little about it that's unfamiliar. It opens with the central character standing with his back towards you whilst a number of crab/scorpion hybrid's creep towards you with poisonous intent. Those acquainted with these *Wolfenstein* inspired shooters won't have to think twice – will naturally reach for the fire button and pump the little buggers full of lead.

A good start. The digitised, leather-clad, shotgun toting sprite is exceedingly well animated, as are the enemies that surround him. Explosions are nicely gory – if slightly unrealistic – and the sound FX are meaty enough to give the game a little substance. However even in this first moment of glory there are tell-tale signs of the impending crapness to come. The sound track, performed by the unsigned band Thai Dyed Suicide, is sub-standard sub-pop/grunge and fails, wholeheartedly, to integrate itself with the game itself. You'll also immediately notice that the environs are gritty, lacking both colour and detail, that you can't move and fire at the same time and if you try to dart out of the way of incoming bullets, that movement is slow and jerky.

In fact the 3DO system's version of *Virtuoso* is an almost exact replica of the PC one – which is ludicrous. The 3DO system excels at being able to generate texture maps on the fly. Its twin-custom graphics engine, with its bundle of built in tricks and cheats make it the perfect vehicle for the *Doom* type game so, in theory at least, its detail, resolution and/or speed of movement should have been

A spider guards the end of level exit. Be wary of its poisonous bile.

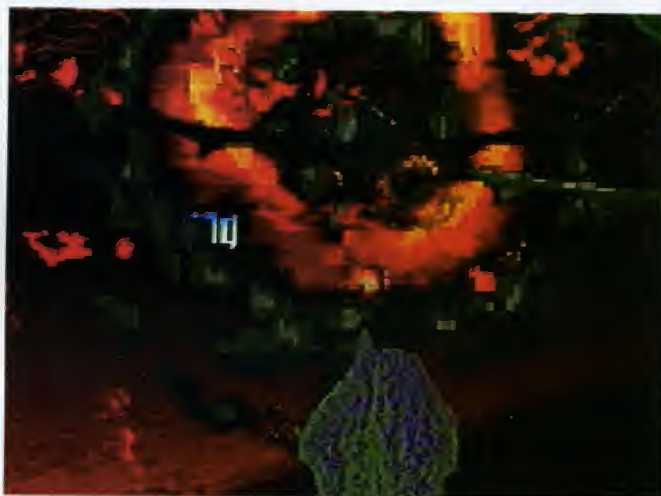


On the PC, iD's *Doom* has been cloned by the world and his dog. *Quarantine*, *Isle Of The Dead*, *Corridor 7*, *Dr Radiaki* – the list of doomed also rans is endless. Only one game generated the sort of hype to suggest it might be in with a fighting chance – Elite's *Virtuoso*, which is also one of the few to make it to your 3DO system.

a considerable improvement over the PC *Virtuoso*. The fact that it's slightly worse (it's certainly a lot slower than the game running on a standard 486 DX2 66Mhz PC) is criminal.

Persevere, however, and you'll be rewarded with some neat little touches. The various 'monster' sprites that you'll find lurking throughout the game are always imaginative, and the three different levels (composed of five or more stages) provide a wide variety of landscapes for you to explore. The programmers have also incorporated a number of characters you should recognise – there's Judge Dredd's robot from 2000AD; Robocop's ED-209, the snowman from the Super Nintendo's *Clayfighter*...

Yet for all these knowing references, *Virtuoso* remains very much a sub-standard game. The graphic engine



just isn't in the same league as something like Crystal Dynamics' *Off-World Interceptor* or even EA's *Escape From Monster Manor*. This fact, coupled with the game-play faults of being too slow, not being able to turn around fast enough to shoot things coming from behind in time and the monstrous design flaw of not being able to move and shoot simultaneously make *Virtuoso* one of the weakest 3DO system releases so far. Even the rather unadventurous *Demolition Man* sub-game offers infinitely better graphics and action, and with the challenging depth of *Slayer* and smooth simplicity of *Escape From Monster Manor* as rivals, this is unlikely to make any impact on the 3DO market. An inauspicious launch for Elite then, who really should have responded to the many criticisms levelled at the PC version and drastically re-worked this poor *Doom* clone. □ dw

3DO Magazine rating: ★

The Dave Stewart-esque main character is brilliantly animated.



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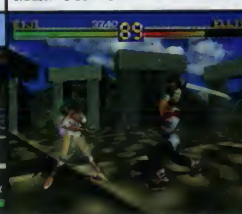
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System Codes

We've been swamped with requests for *Rebel Assault* and *Demolition Man* codes over the last few weeks, but we've also managed to rustle up a few more, excellent cheats to make life easier.

FIFA INTERNATIONAL SOCCER



The ultimate football game on any system at present, this has all the handy cheats and trick modes of its MegaDrive parent, each offered after bashing a computer controlled team. If you're having difficulty though, here's the list in full.

To enter a code, start a match and enter the combination (A, B and C buttons and L and R for shoulder buttons) in the correct sequence whilst the menu for team strategy etc. is on screen. The game will inform you if you've entered it correctly, and all can be input simultaneously for a truly wacky game.

Hot Potato Mode: CRABRLABABBR

Makes receiving the ball rather awkward.

INVISIBLE WALLS MODE: ABBACABABBA

Indoor football for all those players who keep wallopping the ball out of play.

LASER BALL MODE: LACRBALL

Because it's fast.

GIANT PLAYER MODE: BABARBABBAR

They're very big.

BIG BALL MODE: BCBALLABALL

Guess.

METALLIC MEN MODE: BARCLBAABBA

Armoured team.

BEEFCAKE MODE: RALBACLABA

Pink suits on super fast players.

RADICAL CURVE MODE: CRCAABRABBL

Unbelievable after touch.

BRUTE MODE: RABBACLLBACL

A newly vicious team.

CRAZY BOUNCE MODE: LABARRACCA

The world's gone mad.

From **Craig Milne, Aberdeen**

DEMOLITION MAN

Passwords

Whip through this slick tie-in on **Normal Skill Level** with these handy codes. I defy anyone to complete this bruiser on the hardest difficulty setting.

21JNR2BCS

MT3PH2V7Q

HH69HJB94

H5NMHJBW

W8NN12Q2C

M5WDC2KN5

GPHRWZFRH

GQG7J2YC9

JR42G2PJH

JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL

Giant Cheat

Still the best sports simulation on any machine, this cheat turns your team into 12 foot giants. If nothing else, it's certainly ominous for your opponent.

Press **pause**, then tap the **top-right** button, **A** then **P**. The crowd will cheer to let you know the cheat has worked.

Cheat Cheat

To expose the plays of your opponent (surely the most heinous of cheats), press **B**, **top left**, **A** and **B**. Another cheer, and now you need never lose.

Press **A** and **X** when **paused** to reset these cheats if you're overcome with guilt.

WAY OF THE WARRIOR

Boss Codes

This noisy and visually stunning beat-'em-up is a lot more fun with these secret cheats to use the two, enormous boss characters. Type in the the below as player names, go to VS mode, move the character selection box to the right of crimson Glory and hurrah, you've got the two biggest meanies to battle with ever seen.

A Gavin Jun 11, 1970 - Play as Kull

J Rubin, Jan 6, 1970 - Play as Abbot

PARANOID MAY 5 1975 - Play in a rather weird cave.

REBEL ASSAULT



Level Codes

A curious mixture of poor and playable games, this has had the office phone ringing non-stop, with impatient Star Wars fans demanding to know the later codes. Well, here they are, to be used on the **easy** setting.

BOSSK Asteroids

ENGRET A-Wing Surface

RAIRRA Star Destroyer attack

FRIJA Shoot Tie-Fighters before base, then ground forces at Mos Eisley:

LAFRA More asteroids

DERLIN Caves, chasing the Probot in snowspeeder

MOLTOK At-Ats

MORAG Stormtroopers

TANTISS Protect transport

OSWAFI River bed, Yavin training

KLAATU Tie-Fighters, approaching Death Star

IRENEZ Death Star surface

LIANNA Surface cannon

PAKKA Trench

Failure to blast the core reactor with your photon torpedoes ends the game, sadly, so aim accurately if you don't want to have to restart.

JAMMIT



Level Codes

This addictive game has had Dave and myself glued to the monitor trying to work through all of the different game variations. Here's all of them (playing as **Roxy**).

DKRBNSN - 2 Hot

STPKRNR - Poison

SSNHYDN - Frenzy

JNFRBCN - In 2 It

LRNCHLS - Sweat

PLWRHDS - Slams Only

STWSPKN - Cut throat

OFF-WORLD INTERCEPTOR

Extra Money

There's no doubt that with no save game or passwords, this superb game is very difficult, so to enable you to splash out on every extra bit of hardware available, here's a brilliant cheat to get more money. Go to the options screen and press **A, B, C, A, B, C, A, B, C, A, B, C, A, B, C, A, B, C** and **Left Shift**. Pop to the shop and you'll have \$9,999,990!

SUPER STREET FIGHTER II X

Be Akuma in Vs. Mode

In the Vs. character select mode, highlight Ryu with your control pad, then simultaneously hold down all the **kick** and **punch** buttons and **Select** until Akuma's face appears. □ mcw

competition

3DO
Magazine

WIN A 24 Carat GoldStar

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What storage device does the GoldStar 3DO System use?

- a. double speed CD-ROM drive
- b. hard disc
- c. cartridge based unit

Closing date for entries is the 30th of April.



3DO Interactive

Dear Ed.,

Well, what can I say? I'm impressed! It looks like I've made two good decisions within a month for a change: buying a 3DO and subscribing to this mag.

I'm glad to see you have a news section that brings all the snippets of information together - it's usually the first thing I look for in any new mag.

I thought the interviews were interesting and informative: it's nice to know that there are people of this calibre in the 3DO's corner and they're not resting on their laurels but looking to the future (i.e. the M2 Accelerator) which, if what R. J. Mical says is true (and the software is good enough) should hold the machine up against the new super consoles (you know the ones I mean!), which don't look quite so impressive now. Any more interviews in the pipeline?

More features please! The *Wing Commander III* article was pretty thorough and I liked the number of screenshots you used. After all, it's all very well writing about how good the game looks, but how do we know if all we get is text?

I would also definitely like to see more profiles of other companies which are supporting the 3DO (with exclusive screenshots of their up-and-coming software titles of course!).

Right, I think that's the grovelling finished with, so on to other matters.

Flying Nightmares. I just hope that this will play as good as it looks because it should be outstanding. The only problem I have with this is the ten billion year wait until it's released! And is the Flightstick Pro out yet? What's the financial damage?

What's happened to *Theme Park*? I heard that it might not be released until January if at all!

I must also congratulate Electronic Arts on their titles for the 3DO system, especially *Road Rash* and *FIFA Soccer* which are the best versions on any format (and I can't wait for *Space Hulk*). Any news of them doing *NHL '95 Ice-Hockey*?

In closing, and just to cheer you up, I might write again! I could try editing this letter but I already edit a PBM newsletter and besides, you get paid for editing because that's what an Editor does (or is that 'delegate responsibility'? I can never remember that one...).

Anyway, good luck with the magazine and I hope that the 3DO scene continues to gather speed. I've already got three mates to buy 3DOs after I showed them *Road Rash*!

Craig Milne, Aberdeen

Glad you're happy with everything, Craig, and thanks for the *FIFA* codes. The magazine brief was to convey just how much activity was going on around the 3DO world, emphasising the long term potential and enormous industry support rather than just blasting through all the great games, and as you can see, we've continued all the features you enjoyed and shall continue to hassle everyone in the industry for interviews as long as there's a phone in the office.

Flying Nightmares does look fabulous - it's been one of the most eagerly received previews of last month - and the Flightstick Pro should be available soon, but nothing's confirmed as yet.

Champagne bottles and congratulatory faxes (well, more of the latter) from across the globe poured into our humble offices following the launch of 3DO Magazine, the enthusiasm of the industry being matched by the public vote of confidence, making it a very merry Christmas at Paragon towers. Whilst we confidently expected existing 3DO machine owners to try our new publication, we were surprised and pleased to discover that many people bought the magazine before buying a 3DO - we seem to have persuaded a lot of people to join the cause. Please address positive correspondence (or negative, if you must) to: 3DO Magazine Mail, Paragon Publishing Ltd., Durham House, 124 Old Christchurch Road, Bournemouth BH1 1NF or Fax us on 0202 299955.

Theme Park is scheduled (as I write) for a January 13th release, so you should be able to get your hands on it by the time you read this. We'll have some rather superb cheat codes for that next month.

I don't think EA's importance to the success of the 3DO can be over estimated - their early releases have made (and still are making) a tremendous impact - we're still playing *Road Rash* and *Madden* to death in the office - and we're all counting down the minutes to *Syndicate* and *Space Hulk*. Just a five minute session of the latter, a few weeks ago, had us pleading with our favourite EA rep not to take it away. He did though. Nothing's confirmed on *NHL '95*, but I'd be surprised if EA didn't consider it a potential 3DO release for later this year.

I asked our editor, Dave, what delegation meant, but he said he preferred to explain by demonstration, tapping his Mickey Mouse watch, sternly. On with the letters, I think...

Dear 3DO Magazine,

You've made a young man very happy over Christmas, with your staggeringly good launch issue. After months of trawling through infantile multi-formats trying to get a decent overview of 3DO software from the juvenile rantings of complete dullards, I've finally got a real games bible for my machine. I think I was most pleased by the high quality of your reviews and features, the up-market journalism reflected delightfully in the classy design that really caught my poorly eye (too many crap magazines).

As a jaded ex-CD32 owner (it used to be the future of video games) the wonder of playing arcade perfect gems like *Super Streetfighter II X* is even more pronounced, and whilst I've been doing a lot of overtime at my typing temp job lately (big building, boring people) to pay off my 3DO overdraft, it's been worth it. The only problem is that I can't get out of debt, because super games like *Need For Speed* and *JumpGate* keep robbing me of my money. Life is hard.

The buzz for 3DO at my local Game really is growing, with gangs of doe-eyed sheep gawking at *FIFA* and *Road Rash* before jiggling their pound coins and bleating forlornly. A quick glimpse at a 32X game usually finishes them off. It's great to have the best machine around.

I don't have any questions, to be honest, I just wanted to convey my enthusiasm for your new project, and wish you well for the future. If you want to reward my heart-warming good nature with a year subscription, that'll be just fine, thanks.

Sebastian Paine, Winchester

The rosy glow your praise imbued was swiftly lost (along with your subscription) at the cessation of your letter. More subtlety in future begging letters please.

Dear 3DO Magazine,

It's great to see a mag devoted to the 3DO at last, as I won't have to buy three separate mags to get my 3DO information anymore.

Although the reviews and layout of the magazine was really good, it seemed a bit short, especially for £4.99. The CD was disappointing, being just a copy of the 3DO sampler disc released in the US more than six months ago, and the *Off-World Interceptor* demo wasn't exactly as action-packed as the picture you illustrated on your cover.

Anyway, I've decided to subscribe, and wish you a successful future. Would it be possible to have a Japanese info section with import reviews, as this is about the biggest market in the world. Jap cover CDs are great too, full of new demos... take note.

I'm looking forward to seeing your magazine improve and develop in the future, and wish you all the best of luck.

Stephen Jenkins, Carisbrooke

Whilst, superficially, the first issue may have appeared slim, there was a lot of information packed on every page, don't you think? OK, so it was smaller than the average console mag, but the market must be tested before we throw thousands of pounds on a new magazine, particularly a publication dedicated to a new machine. We're still cramming a bit this month, with so much software and news to cover, but I think we offer exceptional value for money for the amount of editorial content. The enormous success of our first issue means the future looks bright for a larger magazine in the near future.

I appreciate that if you'd already gotten hold of the 3DO Sampler disc, appeal of our magazine must have dimmed, but to be fair, the sampler disc wasn't officially available in this country, and there would have been few people such as yourself who would already own the disc. I also think you're being a touch unfair suggesting that the disc wasn't up to much in the first place. As an introduction to some of the first 3DO games available in this country, I think it was an excellent teaser, with mostly playable demos of high quality releases. True, some people would already have bought several of these games, but most would not - remember the 3DO system has only been available in the UK a few months officially - and certainly from the response we've received, most readers seem more than satisfied. Future discs are being negotiated now, and we'll make every effort to ensure that subsequent discs are eagerly received.

Jap coverage - our 3DO World section deals with all that's hot in Japan and elsewhere, OK? □ mcw

3DO Magazine

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Issue 6 out on sale February 2nd

Highly Recommended

Where Mark Wynne rounds up the best of last month's games, all of which demand serious attention...



FIFA International, Electronic Arts, £44.99

A stunning showcase for the technical prowess of the 3DO, and, specifically, the EA Canadian team who programmed it, *FIFA International* is one of the first, true Next Generation titles to appear, with phenomenal graphics, superlative sonics and a thoroughly enjoyable football game itself tucked beneath all the stunning gloss. There's a huge range of camera views, tournaments, obscenely slick replay modes and, most impressively of all, a six-player game (if you've got a few 3DO joypads), and whilst gameplay could have been tweaked to correct a few inadequacies with the 16-bit original, few will be immune to the thrill this game invokes. Essential.



John Madden Football, Electronic Arts, £39.99

The first game on the 3DO system to really knock the 16-bit consoles on the head, *Madden* is a definitive piece of programming, providing one of the most complete marriages of graphical panache and richly rewarding gameplay around. Initially, it's the graphics that will blow you away – the superbly detailed players, smooth scrolling stadium and stunning action replays – but this is the first American Football game to look so good it'll hook anyone into the initially confusing sport. The complexity of the game is its own reward, and whilst one-player games are thrilling, with another joystick and a friend to battle against, this is the best two-player game available on any system.



Off-World Interceptor, Crystal Dynamics, £39.99

Ripping out the successful graphics engine of their brilliant *Total Eclipse*, Crystal Dynamics have casually created a visually stunning road-combat game that simply couldn't be done any other machine. With beautiful, enemy infested planet surfaces to race through, drop-dead music and high addictivity, this is enormous fun, particularly enjoyable as a two-player, split screen head-to-head. Although it lacks the finesse of, say, *Need For Speed*, for arcade fans this is hardcore entertainment, damaged only by a lack of a save game facility, which makes repeated solo play exhausting. Technically faultless, this offers satisfying short-term fun and endless two-player war.



Road Rash, Electronic Arts, £44.99

Taking a playable but technically uninspiring MegaDrive racing game, EA wrapped some of the most exciting graphics ever seen on a home console around this simple race-and-punch bike game, creating a 'must have' title that still rates as one of the most sumptuous pieces of programming around. With superb FMV interludes that actually add to the game rather than distract, thumping rock tracks from bands you've actually heard of (Sound Garden, Therapy? etc.) and furiously compelling gameplay, this is a prime example of just what your 3DO can do. Without peer in its genre (*Need For Speed* being more of a simulation than an arcade game), this is unmissable.



Samurai Shodown, Crystal Dynamics, £39.99

A hip Neo Geo fighting game, this has been faultlessly converted to 3DO by the prolific Crystal Dynamics, retaining all the quirky originality of the arcade game to recreate a hugely enjoyable beat-'em-up. The hook is the inclusion of weapons, from enormous swords to vicious dogs, and this gives the genre a much appreciated shot in the arm. The generous blood spilling and thrilling characters all combine to make this a stunning conversion, which may not have the long term appeal of *Super SFII Turbo*, but looks just as good and could inspire a similar level of fanatical worship-don on the 3DO as it has everywhere else. Another breath-taking flourish by Crystal Dynamics.



Super Street Fighter II Turbo, Panasonic, £60

What can we say? The most accurate conversion of the most famous arcade game, the 3DO could have no better ally for its cause than this exemplary title. All the characters, all the moves, special combinations and brilliant sound, this is *Street Fighter II* in your own home at a fraction of the cost. True fans will need Capcom's special pad to get the most out of the game, as the 3DO pad isn't that comfortable for long stretches of button bashing, but it's a small additional outlay for the privilege of playing this mega-game. Impressive enough to convert any novice to the joys of this superior beat-'em-up, there's no reason anyone should be without this game, except perhaps poverty.



The Horde, Crystal Dynamics, £39.99

Although this sneaked onto PC first, *The Horde* was originally developed for the 3DO, by none other than Crystal Dynamics, and it's one of the finest original games we've played. The premise is simple – protect, nurture and reap profit from small areas of land, defending yourself and your property from regular attacks from red, hungry Hordlings – but this doesn't convey the huge satisfaction gained from play. It's like no other console title, combining utterly addictive gameplay, marvellous rewards for successful play and some of the best FMV sequences ever, being funny, literate and involving. The most unique title on 3DO, and essential for arcade and strategy fans alike.



The Need For Speed, Electronic Arts, £44.99

A dream come true for boy-racers the world over, this is the most realistic and thrilling race game ever, with superbly rendered dream cars, long, challenging tracks plus about two tonnes of slick presentation. Competing against computer controlled opponents along busy American highways and countryside, *Need For Speed* has the most gorgeous interface ever designed – never has a video game captured the thrill of driving with such accuracy and to such exciting effect. This is one of the most addictive games around, and with a superb action replay feature, multiple views, tough opponents and realistic sound effects, is guaranteed to hook anyone. A transcendental experience.



Theme Park, Electronic Arts, £34.99

A brilliant twist on *Sim City*, this replaces the boring task of urban renewal with the thrilling job of running a theme park. Vending machines, entertainers, bouncy castles and eventually thrill-packed roller coasters, this has near limitless scope for building and maintaining a small slice of heaven. *Theme Park* immediately attracts more than *Sim City* since it's so much more fun to watch your visitors, ask them questions and lure them onto rickety, tumble-down rides, than just stare at a distant town. This is very seductive, simple, yet extraordinarily sophisticated and it remains one of the most brilliant games ever written, with the 3DO version being the best yet.

The GAME SHACK

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Software Directory

Alone In The Dark

Infogrames, £39.99

The game that made Infogrames' name, *Alone In The Dark* shattered preconceptions about what PC gaming was about when it was released in the winter of 1993. Multiple camera angles, haunting polygon graphics and a Voodoo inspired storyline made it the most intimate and atmospheric adventure of the time. It still looks pretty amazing even now, and is well worth a look – especially if you're a fan of Lovecraft inspired chillers.

(issue 1, Rating: ★★★★★)

Another World

Interplay, £39.99

Originally an Amiga game, *Another World* was a welcome twist on the platform genre. Using rotoscoped sprites and intimate camera angles it achieved a cinematic gloss for the platform genre – quite an achievement at the 16-bit time. The 3DO system's version doesn't tamper with the game's near perfect fundamentals, but adds 256 colours to bring the game up to date a little. A stylish conversion of a 16-bit classic.

(issue 1, Rating: ★★★★★)

Battle Chess

Krisalis, £39.99

All 3-D chessboards, bar none, are fundamentally flawed in that a piece closest to the screen will obscure those pieces behind it. *Battle Chess* doesn't prove to be an exception to the rule, and the visual-candy isn't sweet enough to make the extra squinting that's required worthwhile. To its credit the 32-bit RISC chip of the 3DO system powerhouses a V8 chess engine and the game incorporates a clear and simple 2-D board for the more serious player.

(issue 1, Rating: ★★★★★)

Burning Soldier

Panasonic, £39.99

A distinctly Japanese game, *Burning Soldier* follows where *Microcosm* and *Novastorm* have been before by transposing interactive sprites onto an uninteractive, pre-rendered backdrop. Naturally that makes for a fairly linear adventure, but one also with in-your-face manga-esque graphics to whet the appetite of any shoot-'em-up fan.

(issue 1, Rating: ★★★★★)

Dragon's Lair

Elite, £39.99

More of a cartoon than a game, Sullivan Bluth's arcade classic wows those who watch the game, but frustrates those who are actually playing it. Gameplay is restricted to pressing the correct button at exactly the right time. This gets very tedious. The quality graphics – drawn at the Don Bluth studios – are amazing however, and can be attributed to the game's cult success.

(issue 1, Rating: ★★★★★)

Escape From Monster Manor

Electronic Arts, £39.99

The 3DO system's answer to id's *Wolfenstein/Doom* games shows that the 3DO system is more than capable of the first person 3D perspective arcade game currently causing such a sensation on the PC. In fact, EFMM shows that the 3DO system, with its ability to create translucent sprites and gorgeous texture maps, is more than a match for its 15 year old counterpart. Unfortunately, what EFMM lacks is id's design skill, and the pure, unadulterated rush of the their *Doom* games. Let's hope Art Data Interactive (responsible for porting *Doom* and *Doom 2*) can merge the technology with the gameplay, as this is rather dull.

(issue 1, Rating: ★★★★★)

The most important thing for any new console is software. Without it you've got an expensive lump of plastic of no use whatsoever. Fortunately though, no 3DO system owner need worry about that problem. With over 50 games already out, and many more to come, the 3DO system boasts a diverse and quality-packed back catalogue.

FIFA International

Electronic Arts, £44.99

The most stylish and visually impressive soccer game there has ever been, Electronic Arts met the huge pre-release hype with a product unusually more than worthy of the attention. From the superb FMV intro, spliced with in-game action scenes hardly distinguishable from real-life, to the multitude of camera angles, slow motion controls and sound FX, *FIFA International* is a game that looks good enough to eat. Purists may argue that gameplay isn't a match for the no frills *Sensible Soccer*, but then they're just sad. Worth buying a 3DO system for, especially with the four player option.

(issue 1, ★★★★★)

Gridders

The 3DO Company, £39.99

36 levels of torturous puzzling action, *Gridders* is one of the more unusual games to have made its way onto the 3DO system. The aim of the game is to collect gems, secreted within moving blocks. To get the gems out you have to stop the blocks moving – a feat far from simple. Most blocks won't stop when you stand in their way, they'll just crush you. *Gridders* is entertaining for a while but the lack of any real catch means that its pleasures are ephemeral – you'll soon want to move onto a game with a little more substance. Like *Shanghai Triple Threat...* A reasonable attempt to create the success of a puzzler like *Tetris*, but ultimately flawed.

(issue 1, ★★★★★)

John Madden Football

Electronic Arts, £39.99

Inarguably the best American Football game on any format ever. EA's masterpiece merges together incredibly detailed, beautifully animated sprites, with stereo sound, FMV and gameplay made in heaven. *John Madden Football* also comes with a plethora of options allowing the complete beginner and the football pro alike the perfect level of competition. Brilliant in one player mode, unmissable in two.

(issue 1, Rating: ★★★★★)

MegaRace

Mindscape, £39.99

Developed by French software house, Cryo, *MegaRace* was initially developed for the PC before being updated and uprated for the 3DO system. Using pre-rendered backdrops the scenery is naturally stunning, and the foreground sprites (the cars) surprisingly realistic. Unfortunately, *MegaRace* suffers from the infliction that all pre-rendered games do – shallowness of gameplay. It's all too simplistic and repetitive.

(issue 1, Rating: ★★★★★)

Night Trap

Virgin, £39.99

Oh dear. Originally developed for the MegaCD, *Night Trap* is a sad little exploitation title that goes for the adolescent audience by offering the player the chance to view semi-clad girlies running about a besieged house. The FMV is of a high standard – much better than the acting – and presentation is very slick, but this is killer blow to FMV heavy products, with very little involvement. Our rating says it all.

(issue 1, Rating: ★★★★★)

Off-World Interceptor

Crystal Dynamics, £39.99

Off World Interceptor is one of those games that couldn't be done on any other machine, relying on the 3DO system's twin custom engine to generate its glorious backdrops in real time. The graphic engine is, in fact, a variant of the *Total Eclipse* one, only this time it's been used to build a racing game – with a difference. Winning here doesn't mean getting past the finishing line first, but destroying your enemy before he/she destroys you. With lasers, missiles, bombs, etc. at your disposal there's going to be explosions aplenty. Okay in one-player mode (lack of a save game is frustrating), brilliant in two.

(issue 1, ★★★★★)

PaTaank

Crystal Dynamics, £39.99

Instead of the conventional top down view of the pinball table, P.F. Magic actually place the camera behind the pinball. Stick with it and the game begins to make some sort of (weird) sense. Instead of having flippers your 'craft' has a supply of velocity which you must use to guide it around, hitting power-ups and bonuses as you go. Odd, but strangely enjoyable, it's certainly an acquired taste.

(issue 1, Rating: ★★★★★)

Powers Kingdom

Panasonic, £39.99

A very Japanese RPG which boasts some impressively cinematic effects. There's plenty of combat and it's quite addictive, however over the long term it does suffer from repetitiveness. Not exciting enough to please arcade buffs, and not sophisticated enough to woo RPG addicts, this is an interesting failure.

(issue 1, Rating: ★★★★★)

Real Pinball

Panasonic, £39.99

More conventional than *PaTaank*, *Real Pinball* dispenses with the top-down view of a pinball table, opting instead for the more realistic foreshortened view. Unfortunately, the poorly defined graphics make everything in the distance almost impossible to see. *Real Pinball* is also poorly programmed with the ball moving as though it's surrounded by treacle. Not one of the best games the 3DO system has to offer.

(issue 1, Rating: ★★★★★)

Rise Of The Robots

Art Data Interactive, £44.99

Rise Of The Robots was in development for so long that many began to doubt that it would ever arrive. Arrive it did, however, and immediately confounded the sceptics with its glorious graphics and okay-ish gameplay. *Rise Of The Robots* may be no match for *SuperStreet Fighter 2* in respect of its combat engine (you can't even jump over your opponent!), but its visuals are truly next generation stuff – if you're shallow enough to care about such things...

(issue 1, Rating: ★★★★★)

Road Rash

Electronic Arts, £44.99

Another game that could only be done on the 3DO system,

EA's *Road Rash* is a glorious insight into things to come. Marrying arcade-style instant addiction with home computer style depth it's also, arguably, the best game released on the 3DO system to date. With over five different types of terrain, a sound track including the likes of *Therapy?* and *SoundGarden*, increasingly powerful motorbikes and brilliant FMV this is a 'must have' game – only just missing out on being perfect by the absence of a two-player mode.

(issue 1, Rating: ★★★★★)

Sewer Shark

Virgin, £39.99

With *Blade Runner's* FX whiz John Dykstra responsible for directing the game, the cinematic experience of Digital Pictures behind him, *Sewer Shark* was always going to be an FMV-heavy product with a distinctly movie-style look and feel. What's surprising, perhaps, is that gameplay, though limited, isn't actually all that bad with fast, frenetic shoot-'em-up action throughout. It's just a shame about the incredibly cheesy, all-American dialogue and the limitations of a game engine overshadowed by such products as *Shock Wave* (see below).

(issue 1, Rating: ★★)

Shock Wave

Electronic Arts, £39.99

Although this features some of the most impressive presentation around (the end-of-the-world-is-nigh scenario is superbly realised), gameplay is rather lacklustre, with simple objectives and overly long, repetitive missions. Fans of the blasting genre should be entertained by the action though – few would deny the technical accomplishment achieved – and the newly launched data disc, *Operation JumpGate*, with five new missions, certainly provides a much more challenging and enjoyable game. It's just a shame you need to buy the original to play the new missions.

(issue 1, Rating: ★★)

Samurai Showdown

Crystal Dynamics, £39.99

Samurai Showdown is widely regarded as the best beat-'em-up available on the saturated Neo Geo market. Huge, colourful, brilliantly animated sprites, richly detailed backdrops and twelve very different characters to choose from make the game an immensely rewarding experience. It may not be quite as fast as *SSFII*, nor quite so sophisticated, but its bold characters, colours and wide variety of locations put this neck and neck with its better known peer.

(issue 1, Rating: ★★★★★)

Slayer

SSI/Lion Entertainment, £39.99

Well known on the PC for their *Ravenloft* series, SSI looks set to make a respectable name for themselves on the 3DO system too. *Slayer* uses a graphic engine similar to that in *Doom*, giving the player a first person perspective to view the action around him. It feels slightly more arcadey than most computer based RPGs – there is, for example, an emphasis on combat – yet there's enough that's typical of the genre to satisfy even traditionalists. A welcome addition to the 3DO system's increasingly diverse back catalogue.

(issue 1, Rating: ★★★★★)

Soccer Kid

Krisalis, £39.99

Soccer Kid is one of the better platform games to have been released into the console world over the last year. One of the main reasons for this is that the eponymous hero is able to do more than just run and jump, but also use his ball to cannon opponents, jump to high up places and so reach otherwise inaccessible areas. These skills allow for more sophisticated gameplay and varied scenarios – which has to be a good thing in this the most tired genre of them all. Well coded and great fun.

(issue 1, Rating: ★★)

Star Control II

Crystal Dynamics, £39.99

Star Control was originally released far before my time in the

ascetic days of 8-bit games and its conversion to the 3DO does little to enhance the geriatric look. Sprites are blobby, backgrounds near non-existent – yet that doesn't matter too much. This game is all about gameplay. One player mode is good, the two-player shoot-'em-up action plain fantastic. Once you've popped you just won't be able to stop.

(issue 1, Rating: ★★★★★)

Super Street Fighter II X

Panasonic, £60

The definitive beat-'em-up, Capcom's *Street Fighter 2* sold more 16-bit Super Nintendos than any other game. An incredibly sophisticated combat engine allowed for moves, counter-moves and even counter-counter moves so that mastering the intricacies of the games was near impossible. The 3DO system's version is naturally the most comprehensive conversion of them all being arcade-perfect. Despite the slightly high price, this is one of the select group of 'must have' games, absolutely unmissable for any serious beat-'em-up fan.

(issue 1, Rating: ★★★★★)

Super Wing Commander

Electronic Arts, £39.99

First released on the PC as long ago as 1991, the game's developers, Origin, have re-written the original *Wing Commander* game to take account of the 3DO system's impressive hardware. As well as replacing the drab 1940's style in-game sections with state-of-the-art FMV, the in-game graphics are now fully textured mapped and as super-smooth as only the 3DO system allows. Indeed the only thing that has stayed the same is Origin's insistence on a strong narrative to provide a backdrop to the action. Intelligent and action-packed – what more could you ask for, except, perhaps, *Wing Commander III*?

(issue 1, Rating: ★★★★★)

The Horde

Crystal Dynamics, £39.99

An inspired idea perfectly translated into binary form, *The Horde* successfully integrates a number of gaming styles into a brilliantly comprehensive package. The object of the game is simple – protect your village from the Hordlings and so allow it to grow and flourish. Actually achieving that goal will be far from simple, however. You'll have to set your traps in the right place, position your Knights and Archers where they're needed – and run about like a mad thing squishing the vile red beasts with your trusty sword. Entertaining and addictive, this is a frighteningly good game, with concept perfectly realised.

(issue 1, Rating: ★★★★★)

The Lost Files Of Sherlock Holmes

Electronic Arts, £39.99

The Lost Files Of Sherlock Holmes was one of the first 'multimedia' releases, appearing on the PC sometime ago now. Its tag of multimedia was acquired simply by virtue of the FMV sections which would pop up in a small window were you to talk to someone, or an event was triggered. Unsurprisingly the FMV will fail to inspire many 3DO system owners now, which leaves the gameplay. Unfortunately, this is far too linear and slow moving to provide long-lasting appeal.

(issue 1, Rating: ★★)

The Need For Speed

Electronic Arts, £44.99

Screenshots don't do *The Need For Speed* justice for the simple reason that it's not the motionless car sprites that are impressive, but the clever mathematics that govern them. Perhaps for the first time ever in the console world the player is provided with vehicles whose momentum feels eerily real – a fact that makes the crashes so visually authentic and spectacular. There are eight super-cars to race (and trash) including the Porsche 911, Ferrari Testarossa, Dodge Viper and the Honda NSX, plus any of these cars as your pace opponent. Driving has never, ever been so fun.

(issue 1, Rating: ★★★★★)

Theme Park

Electronic Arts, £34.99

Bullfrog's brilliantly addictive sim game set within the crazy world of the Theme Park gives the player complete control over a mass of variables, and abandons him there. As you'd expect, each of these variables is intricately linked – put an ice cream vendor too close to a ride, for example, and you'll have kids throwing up everywhere. An incredibly compulsive game, *Theme Park* will appeal to those 3DO system players who want a little more than just fast, photon spitting sprites from their games. Atmospheric and absorbing, this is a stunning piece of entertainment.

(issue 1, Rating: ★★★★★)

Total Eclipse

Crystal Dynamics, £39.99

One of the first games to have come out on the 3DO system and also one of the best, Crystal Dynamics' *Total Eclipse* generates imagery in real time on a par with anything in pre-rendered games. *Total Eclipse* allows you real freedom of movement (within a fairly wide corridor) to explore its gorgeously detailed, yet terribly hostile environment. With sublime sound FX and music, 20 levels (including terrifying tunnel sections) a wide array of weapons and brilliantly rendered enemies, this is marred only by an extraordinarily high difficulty setting.

(issue 1, Rating: ★★★★★)

Twisted

Electronic Arts, £39.99

One of the most innovative and intriguing games for the 3DO system yet, *Twisted* uses the 3DO system's FMV capability to produce the world's first true multimedia gameshow. The basic objective is for you, and up to five friends, to get to the top of a spiralling stair case. Naturally, getting there will be difficult with all sorts of mental puzzles and general knowledge tests put in your way. Wisely, EA have included various difficulty settings so that both the adult and the child can be catered for simultaneously. Bizarre, innovative and good fun.

(issue 1, Rating: ★★★★★)

Waialae Country Club

Panasonic, £39.99

Despite the obvious lack of courses in *Waialae Country Club*, the game still wins you over with gorgeous digitised graphics, which are much more impressive than US Gold's *World Cup* rival. Gameplay isn't quite so sophisticated though, and whilst novices will be satisfied by this slick, polished sim, serious golfers will be left wanting much more in the way of variety. Considering the space available on a CD, the course deficiency can only be blamed on laziness rather than memory restrictions, a fault that can be levelled at all 3DO system golf software at present.

(issue 1, Rating: ★★★★★)

Way Of The Warrior

Interplay, £39.99

Whilst the extravagant, boldly digitised characters of *Warrior* immediately inspire excitement, play reveals a relatively poor *Mortal Kombat* clone. A hard rock soundtrack blasts along with the bloodthirsty action, and some of the backdrop designs are extraordinary, but play is awkward, the controls lacking an intuitive feel and close quarter combat's difficult to accomplish. Flawed fun.

(issue 1, Rating: ★★★★★)

World Cup Golf

US Gold, £39.99

An altogether more serious stab at the golfing genre, this doesn't quite succeed in being the portentous sim to end all golfing sims it clearly wants to be. The digitised graphics are rather drab and the much vaunted FMV clips of your tee-offs don't really work. However, the degree of control available over the ball is impressive, as are the enormous array of play options and tournament styles. Sadly, a lack of courses cripples this as much as its less ambitious golfing rivals, and the rather sluggish nature of play will alienate non-genre fans baffled by the pace.

(issue 1, Rating: ★★★★★)

3DO Magazine

Coming Soon



The world of 3DO software just keeps expanding. Below is a list of the titles already announced, but there's many more in development across the world, including several EA titles already in production for the M2 upgrade.

ART DATA INTERACTIVE

Doom I

The phenomenally successful first-person perspective blaster is upgraded for the 3DO system. [Spring]

Doom II: Hell On Earth

The current PC mega-hit is bound to be huge on 3DO. [Spring]

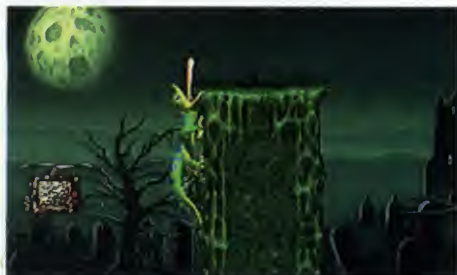
CRYSTAL DYNAMICS

Cyber Clash

Heavily armed robots clash in a spectacular 3D arena. [Spring]

Gex

Hype-cute, hyperactive platformer. [January]



DIGITAL PICTURES

Corpse Killer

A Caribbean-set, FMV heavy shoot-'em-up which requires a light-gun for best results. [TBA]

Supreme Warrior: Ying Heung

A bizarre FMV fighting game. [TBA]

DOMARK

Flying Nightmares

State-of-the-art sim based around Harrier jumpjet. [April]

ELECTRONIC ARTS

PGA Tour Golf

Likely to be the very best golf game there has ever been (honest!), despite the stiff competition from US Gold and T&E Soft. [Soon]

Syndicate

A subtly re-worked version of the PC version, Syndicate should be a release that everyone wants. Hugely atmospheric and entertaining, it'll stretch both your mind and your trigger finger. Ballistically huge. [April]

Space Hulk

A raved over shoot-'em-up cum strategy hybrid based on the famous board game is brilliantly upgraded for

the 3DO system. [March]

Wing Commander 3

The most expensive video game ever made with stunningly smooth FMV, and dazzling 3D in-game action. Stars Mark 'Luke Skywalker' Hamill.



ELITE

Power Slide

A 3D rallying game with the emphasis on realism. [June]

Dirt Racer

Elite's attempt at the Off-The Road Race game. [April]

GAMETEK

Quarantine

A Doom-style game on wheels, shooting and running over zillions of enemies. [Soon]

Hell

A cyberpunk adventure starring none other than Dennis Hopper as Mr Beautiful. Grace Jones co-stars, along with femme fatale, Stephanie Seymoure. A sure-fire hit? [April]



INFOGRAMES

Alone In The Dark 2

More of the same superb stuff, only bigger and even better. [Spring]

Alone In The Dark 3

The final installment. This time set in the Wild West (in a ghost town no less). [May]

INTERPLAY

Kingdoms

400Mb of FMV is brilliantly integrated into a classic adventure. Sequels are already being planned, as is a coin-op version. [TBA]

MINDSCAPE

A. Maze

A stunning first-person perspective SF sports game for up to eight players. [TBA]

Dragon Lore

A mythological adventure with stunning, pre-rendered graphics from Cryo. [August]

Warriors

A 3D fighting game which, using Atried's own 3D Bio-Motion system, is claimed to be the most realistic yet. [TBA]

Panzer General

Superb strategy game from none other than SSI (Strategic Studies Institute). Raved about on the PC, if you like strategy games, you'll love this. [May]



PANASONIC

Myst

Acclaimed and atmospheric CD-ROM adventure comes to the 3DO system. A smash on the PC its quirky puzzles and amazing pre-rendered visuals gave creators, Robyn and Rand Miller, an unparalleled following. A 'must have' for adventure aficionados. [TBA]

Seal of the Pharaoh

Intriguing Japanese, first-person perspective RPG recently redubbed for the American market. [TBA]

Tetsujin

Doom-type 3D blaster. [Soon]

RAGE/COCONUTS

3DO Striker

The incredibly popular, super fast Amiga game gets upgraded for the 3DO system with FIFA-style graphics. If you like your football games, then this has to be

one of the most eagerly awaited 3DO system releases of the coming year – especially if it manages to marry gameplay with the uprated visuals. [April]

RENEGADE

Several titles are under active consideration for conversion, but as yet nothing can be announced. Speedball II heads our most wanted list!

SIERRA

An early 3DO backer with the disappointing Draxon's Revenge and fun puzzler Incredible Machine now released officially (see page 50). Future releases such as a conversion of Red Baron are still under consideration.

SPECTRUM HOLOBYTE

Star Trek: The Next Generation

A truly epic project which has been in development for over a year. Purposely designed for the 3DO system, it's got stunning 3D graphics and a unique game structure that threatens to blow away any Star Trek fan. A must buy when released. [Spring]



STUDIO 3DO

The All New People's GameShow

Post-communist gameshow likely to be somewhat like the multimedia extravaganza Twisted. Expect weird puzzles, general knowledge questions with an American bias, and much, much more. [Spring]

Blade Force

Heli-Pak wearing vigilante roams the streets in 2110 – or should that be flies through the streets. [Spring]

Killing Time

An abandoned island is the site for some frantic, Doom-style action with stunning graphics. Early sightings look very impressive with monstrous amounts of gore – blood and guts spurting out of bullet ridden bodies. Marvellous. [Soon]

U. S. GOLD

Flashback

The follow-up to platformer the classic 16-bit platformer, Another World, expect more rotoscaped, pseudo 3-D graphics with an emphasis on a movie-style look. [Soon]



VIRGIN

Cannon Fodder

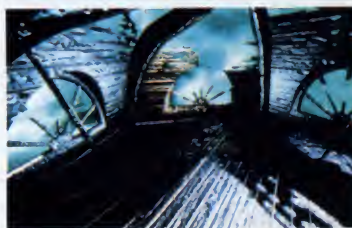
Sensible Software's incredibly addictive shoot-'em-up finally makes its way onto the 3DO system. March your crack troops of tiny men through an isometric enemy landscape shooting as you go. Warning – you only have a finite number of soldiers to waste on the battlefield. [March]

Digital Dreamware

One of the more unusual 3DO releases Digital Dreamware represents a rave-type multimedia project complete with groovy sounds and visuals. Looks interesting. [TBA]

Dragon

A hyper-violent Street Fighter 2 clone with the difference that there can be anything up to three mean mother fighters upon the screen simultaneously. Originally released to rave reviews on the Super Nintendo if you like your beat-'em-ups in any shape or form this looks a more than promising release. [February]



Lost Eden

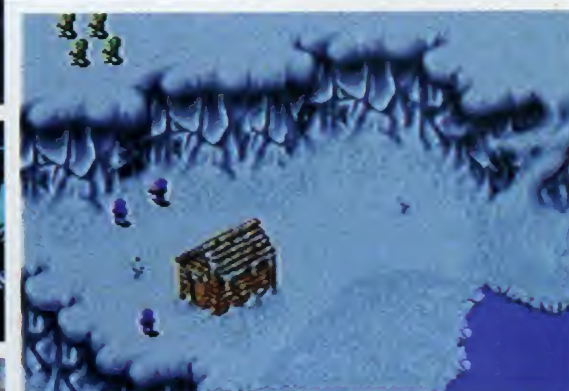
An epic adventure, featuring dinosaurs and mankind unrealistically co-operating in mystical prehistoric times. A Cryo production, Lost Eden should be a gorgeous-looking production, though with their unconvincing MegaRace lurking insidiously in the backdrop, questions must remain over its gameplay. [March]

Heart Of Darkness

Said to be Another World for the 32-bit, 3DO dominated next generation, first impressions suggest an absolutely stunning looking – and playing game. [April]

11th Hour

The sequel to the million selling CD-ROM extravaganza, 7th Guest. Release (on PC) has been put back several times now which suggests that Virgin want it to be something special when it's released later this year. Fantastic, CD-streamed adventure with a horrific bent, 11th Hour will have either a 15 or 18 certificate upon release. [TBA] □



Coming Soon

REVIEWS

Gametek's mega interactive movie *Hell*, the cyberpunk maelstrom starring **Dennis Hopper** hits the 3DO in style

Cult adventure *Myst* and gorgeous RPG *Seal Of The Pharaoh* wing their way over from Panasonic...

Electronic Arts deliver a cluster of killer games, including *Space Hulk*, *Syndicate* and *PGA Tour Golf*, plus, at last, a full review of the game everyone's been waiting for, *Wing Commander III*...

Rage deliver the eagerly anticipated contender for ultimate football simulation, the SNES hit given that special, 3DO magic in *3DO Striker*...

After wooing us with two, fabulous gameshow hits, *Twisted* and *Station Invasion*, Studio 3DO go ballistic with a *Doom* killer, the extraordinary *Killing Time*...

And also boarding the *Doom* bandwagon, Gametek offer the PC smash, *Quarantine*...

More rotoscoped arcade adventure as U. S. Gold follow up *Another World* with *Flashback*...

Plus an avalanche of eagerly awaited titles from Virgin, with *Cannon Fodder*, *Dragon*, *Lost Eden* and *Hearts Of Darkness*...

FEATURES

Dave Westley chews the cud with legendary developers, **EA Canada**, who reveal the genius behind *FIFA International* and *Need For Speed*, and reveal their plans to top these 3DO classics...

We also discuss the potential 3DO mania that will be provoked by the release of the PC's biggest success of '95, the completely wonderful *Magic Carpet* from **Bullfrog**...

Plus all the usual features you'd expect from **3DO Magazine** including a look at **American Laser Games' Gamegun**, and its rapidly expanding catalogue of titles available soon.

Issue 3 of **3DO Magazine** will be a transcendental experience scheduled for the 30th of March. Reserve a copy from your newsagents or join our rapidly expanding army of subscribers. Whatever happens, don't miss **3DO magazine 3**, the ultimate guide to 3DO reality...

3DO/3



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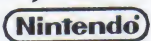
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